

RACE, LABOUR, AND THE POSTMODERN PLANTATION:
JAMAICAN MIGRANT FARMWORKERS IN CANADA'S SEASONAL
AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROGRAM

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Kirsten Elise Hjalmarson

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the College of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

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Submitted by Kirsten Elise Hjalmarson in partial fulfillment of the requirements of

The degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. James Rochlin, Irving K. Barber School of Arts & Sciences, UBC Okanagan

Supervisor, Professor (please print name and faculty/school above the line)

Dr. Ricardo Trumper, Irving K. Barber School of Arts & Sciences, UBC Okanagan

Supervisory Committee Member, Professor (please print name and faculty/school in the line above)

Dr. Patricia Tomic, Irving K. Barber School of Arts & Sciences, UBC Okanagan

Supervisory Committee Member, Professor (please print name and faculty/school in the line above)

Dr. Janet MacArthur, Critical Studies, UBC Okanagan

University Examiner, Professor (please print name and faculty/school in the line above)

Dr. Mercedes F. Duran, Critical Studies, UBC Okanagan

External Examiner, Professor (please print name and university in the line above)

June 20, 2016

(Date submitted to Grad Studies)

Abstract

This ethnographic thesis project critically examines the experiences of Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia via the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). First introduced in 1966, the SAWP is the oldest and longest-standing labour migration regime in Canada and the principal agricultural stream of the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Drawing upon the salient work of numerous activists and scholars who have contended that the SAWP facilitates a form of transnational indentureship by bonding migrant workers to their employers, I argue that the SAWP farm site constitutes a peculiar and totalizing institution that capitalizes on the unfreedom of black labour. I apply critical race theory to situate workers' experiences of surveillance, immobilization, and hyper-exploitation in addition to their characterization of farm life as "prison life" within a postslavery context. I conclude that only by acknowledging the role of racism and its relationship to the border can we ever hope to truly achieve justice for migrant farmworkers in Canada.

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List of Acronyms

AWA	Agricultural Workers Alliance
BC	British Columbia
BCFGA	British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
COEDC	Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
J4MW	Justicia for Migrant Workers
JMLSS	Jamaican Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
NIEAP	Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Policy
RAMA	Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture
SAWP	Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
TMWP	Temporary Migrant Worker Program
TFW	Temporary Foreign Worker
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers Union
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Dedication

To those who run.

Chapter 1. Introduction

I took a deep breathe. My nostrils filled with the thick scent of curry as I leaned forward against the plywood countertop. Even with my back to the room, I knew it was a flurry of activity. Behind me a cluster of chairs of various colours and sizes encircled two mismatched wooden tables. The guys avoided them easily, negotiating the confined space and each other with the fluidity and familiarity of a seasoned professional kitchen during a dinner rush. Only these cooks were shirtless and wore flip flops, their feet scuffling across the concrete floor. A steady stream of human traffic was moving through the side door as the guys stepped out to take calls from home or dashed upstairs to their dorm, where sixteen of them shared a single room of wooden bunkbeds. Beside me, two stoves with four burners each, a microwave, and a handful of secondhand kitchen appliances took up most of the limited counter space. Facing the sink, one could almost forget that this was actually a garage with a makeshift kitchen stretching lengthwise across one wall. The black SUV parked in the center of the room served as our reminder.

Ross glanced sideways at me, turning his attention away from the dishes he was washing. He had been calling regularly for a few weeks now, but this was the first time that I was visiting their dormitories. Our phone conversations were always pleasant and cordial. How was his family? Everyone was fine, he would tell me. When was I coming to see them? Soon, I would reply. He was so collected, our conversations so cursory, I never understood the urgency.

"I'm going home," he told me, his voice low, resolute. "I can't do this no more."

I looked up from the plate he was washing to meet his gaze. "Can't do what?" I asked quietly, matching his volume. The blender began to whirl, drowning out not only our voices, but the reggae music playing from a phone left on the countertop and the sound of dialogue emanating from a small television on the far side of the garage. Someone was making peanut punch. When it was ready, the peanuts ground to a bitter pulp, mixed with milk, and sweetened with cinnamon and honey, Ross would insist that I try it. A taste of Jamaica. A taste of home.

When it was mostly quiet again, he continued. "I can't work like this," he muttered beneath his breath. "I'm telling you, I'm no slave."

.

The sun was warm, but the air was cool. Autumn in the Okanagan always caught me unprepared. I crossed my arms tightly to conserve body heat and shifted my gaze from the lake to the man sitting across from me. "What did he call you?", I asked, leaning intently across the picnic table to better hear his reply,

"He call us nigger," Jacob replied, calmly meeting my gaze. "He rush us, 'Move faster, go faster.' Remember—it's cold. We are walking on rock hard ice. We are cold. And everyone know that's a name that we don't really appreciate. 'Cause that name comes all the way from slavery."

1.1. Research context

In 2014, 7,156 Jamaican migrant workers were employed on Canadian farms (JMLSS, 2015), the majority via the federal Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). At a 2015 dispatch ceremony for the first farmworkers flying to Ontario, Jamaica's former Minister of Labour and Social Security Derrick Keller praised the SAWP and the merits of the country's employment partnership with Canada. In his speech, Keller stated, "Our best wishes and hopes go with you, for the Jamaica-Canada Employment Programme continues to be a beacon of hope and opportunity for many thousands of Jamaicans and a vital source of foreign exchange remittance to the local economy" (JMLSS, 2015).

With early estimates suggesting that remittances from migrant farmworkers employed in Canada totalled CAD \$20 million in 2015 (Skyers, 2016), it is little wonder that the Jamaican government seeks to expand its participation by sending as many as 8,000 farmworkers to Canada in 2016 (Williams, 2016). The highest populated English-speaking country in the Caribbean, Jamaica has one of the slowest growing GDPs of any developing country in the world. According to the World Bank (2016), its gross GDP has been increasing by just 1 per cent per annum over the past thirty years. Although poverty levels dropped by nearly 20 per cent in the 1990s and early 2000s, the 2008 recession saw these levels jump by 8 per cent (World Bank, 2016). Significantly, Jamaica's GINI coefficient of income equality stands at 45.5 (UNDP, 2015). In January 2016, total unemployment for both men and women hovered at 13.3 per cent, while unemployment for youth between the ages of 20 and 24 had dropped one tenth of a point since October 2015 to an astounding 30.2 per cent (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2016). Plantation economists contend that such numbers ought not be examined in their contemporary context without also looking to the modern legacy of slavery (Pantin & Attzs, 2009). Jamaica's continued reliance on traditional agricultural exports, including but no longer limited to

sugarcane, has intensified the consequences of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) recent challenges to Caribbean countries' preferential agreements with the European Union as it seeks to (neo)liberalize Caribbean economies and further open them to the investment of foreign firms (Pantin & Attzs, 2009).

As this brief portrait demonstrates, in this economic climate, the SAWP represents considerable opportunity. Competition amongst applicants is fierce. Applicants successful in Jamaica, typically those with personal connections to local government officials who can also afford or borrow the money to cover their permit application and biometric fees in addition to passing a rigorous medical exam and criminal record check, will be among the "lucky ones" to leave this Caribbean island, their families, children, and communities as they fly away to work. Many return year after year to the same farms, called back by their employers via a naming process and then approved for re-hire by Jamaican liaison officers in Canada. Others will be traveling to Canada for the first time with little to no idea of where it is they are headed, which farm has hired them in what community or which province, and less still of how to pack for life in Canada (interviews by author with numerous Jamaican workers). The stories they have been told by fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers previously employed on Canadian farms cannot fully prepare them for what they have not yet experienced. Several hundred of the total Jamaican workers en route to Canada will be destined for the province of British Columbia (BC) which joined the SAWP in 2004 and began bringing Caribbean workers in 2007 (Fairey et al., 2008). But while the SAWP's provision of essential employment for migrants and flexible labour for Canadian producers has made it popular among policymakers both in Canada and abroad, it has come under increasing fire from scholars and community organizers who have argued that SAWP farmworkers constitute a bonded or indentured labour force (Choudry & Thomas, 2013; Preibisch, 2010; Russo, 2011; Satzewich, 1991; Trumper & Wong, 2010; Walia, 2010).

With this conjecture as my starting point, this ethnographic thesis project explores the experiences of the Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed via the SAWP in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. In my two years of formal fieldwork, I have been guided by the following central research question: How are the everyday lives of Jamaican migrant farmworkers in the Okanagan Valley governed? Put differently, how are their lives organized, and what is their relationship to power? Grounded in the important foundational work of numerous organizers and scholars across the country who have shown that the SAWP facilitates a form of transnational indentureship by binding migrant workers to their employers (Preibisch, 2010; Satzewich, 1991; Trumper & Wong, 2010; Walia, 2010), I argue that the SAWP program and farm plantation constitute a totalizing institution that capitalizes on the racialized unfreedom of black farmworkers. I use critical race theory to link workers' unfreedom to the SAWP farm site, as one of those "peculiar institutions" (Wacquant, 2002) that remains organized around the domination of black labourers through the imposition of extra-legal rules restricting their freedom of movement and association for the extraction of maximum labour. In chapter two of this thesis, I provide a comprehensive breakdown of my theoretical and methodological approaches and how these interact with workers' testimony.

1.1.1. Im/migration and temporary foreign worker programs in Canada

Canada has been discursively constructed as the quintessential "nation of immigrants" (Friesen, 2011; Mowat Centre, 2014). Indeed, Statistics Canada (2006) has characterized the country as an "ethnocultural mosaic", a term long used to differentiate Canada's approach to immigrant integration from that of the melting pot or assimilation model used in the United States. Most recently, Canada has also been touted for its inspirational immigration and integration models as it transitions from policy taker to policy maker, influencing the policy development of

Scandinavian states (Ugland, 2014). As the first country to adopt a federal policy of multiculturalism in 1971, its international political profile has been marked by its perceived tolerance, benevolence, and hospitality, especially toward immigrants (Perry, 2013). Popular mythologies integral to Canada's historical memory include distorted narratives surrounding peaceful relations with Indigenous peoples, its rejection of slavery, and the warm embrace of diverse immigrants from around the world. Absent from many of these discussions is Canada's role in the displacement and exploitation of black, brown, and Indigenous folks, beginning with the Indigenous peoples on whose territories the state was founded in 1867 (Lawrence, 2004) and proceeded by its reliance on slavery, particularly in New France (McKittrick, 2006). In contrast to popular narratives, settler colonialism, white supremacy, and the structural violence integral to their logics are as inherently "Canadian" as hockey or maple syrup, and just as contemporary.

As a settler colonial state, Canada's racial formation has been founded upon joint processes of segregation, exclusion, and violence. Joy (1982) shows how Canadian immigration policy has been crafted throughout history to "keep Canada British", excluding "undesirables" and "aliens" (p. 90-1). Notably, the Immigration Acts of both 1910 and 1953 explicitly distinguished between "preferred" and "non-preferred" races (Joy, 1982). Despite significant policy changes in the 1960s and 1970s which saw the erasure of all references to colour and race from Canadian immigration frameworks in addition to the formal adoption of multiculturalism (Joy, 1982), the exclusionary character of Canadian immigration policy was re-encoded with the 1973 introduction of the Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Policy (NIEAP), a mechanism that allowed for the temporary entrance of those who did not qualify for permanent residency as legally bonded foreign workers (Perry, 2012). The creation and admittance of this new discursive and legal category of "temporary foreign worker" (TFW) was contingent upon

workers' ultimate return to their country of origin at the end of their work contracts. In her textual analysis of parliamentary debates in the five years prior to the NIEAP's legislation, Sharma (2006) shows how the NIEAP constituted "a parliamentary solution" to the "problem of the *permanence* of non-Whites within Canadian society" (p. 23). Indeed, she aptly characterizes the NIEAP as "an extension of past global practices that saw non-Whites brought to Canada as indentured workers while Whites were positioned as permanent settlers" (2006, p. 23).

Sharma is not alone in her critique of Canadian nationhood. Examining the constitution of "subjects", Thobani (2007) challenges dominant depictions of Canada as a compassionate and humanitarian nation founded upon liberal principles of justice and equality for all before the law. Instead, she argues that Canadian nationhood is predicated upon the valourization of certain bodies as deserving national subjects and the simultaneous damnation of undeserving Others. Those subjects worthy of inclusion in the national body, "compassionate, caring, and committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism" must stand constantly on guard, defending hearth and homeland from "virulent, chaotic, criminal" outsiders and their "unreasonable claims" on the nation (Thobani, 2007, p. 4). These she loosely categorizes into three sociopolitical and racial categories, including the Canadian, the Indigenous, and the immigrant. Thobani (2007) writes:

"Citizenship was instituted in a triangulated formation: the Aboriginal, marked for physical and cultural extinction, deserving of citizenship upon abdication of indigeneity; the 'preferred race' settler and future national, exalted as worthy of citizenship *and* membership in the nation; and the 'non-preferred race' immigrant, marked as stranger and sojourner, an unwelcome intruder whose lack of Christian faith, inherent deviant tendencies, and unchecked fecundity all threatened the nation's survival" (p. 75).

Through her investigation, Thobani (2007) ultimately demonstrates that the concept of citizenship, both in Canada as elsewhere, is highly contradictory. Her work calls attention not only to Canada's highly stratified racial landscape, but the ongoing internal paradox of liberal, democratic societies, in which not all are equally emancipated or codified in the law as citizens. Many of those that are included are in fact included ostensibly—incorporated, tolerated, even recognized, but always differentially included or relegated to the periphery of the body politic. Indeed, at its core, "The category citizen, born from the genocidal violence of colonization, exists in a dialectical relation with its Other, the Indian, for whom the emergence of this citizenship was deadly, not emancipatory" (Thobani, 2007, p. 74). Likewise, the Canadian state's exaltation of and hospitality towards preferred (white) immigrant groups deemed worthy of citizenship occur over and against racialized "Others" who are excluded in perpetuity (Thobani, 2007). In what Goldberg (2009) calls "born again racism" (p. 25) or racism without race, such exclusions are organized within a supposedly raceless and therefore non-racist (for how can one be racist if races do not exist?) multicultural Canada.

In the context of a supposedly post-racial state, it is little wonder that Canada's deepening dependence on racialized migrant labour has been an esoteric element of contemporary society, as it directly contradicts dominant visions of Canada and what it means to "be Canadian". Yet in 2008, some 250,000 temporary migrant workers were employed via the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), which represents the umbrella program under which employers in various economic sectors are able to recruit foreign workers on a seemingly "temporary" or seasonal basis (Lenard & Straehle, 2012). 34 per cent of these workers were classified as low skilled, reflecting an increase of nearly 8 per cent from 2002 (Lenard & Straehle, 2012). 2008 also saw the number of temporary foreign workers admitted to Canada on an annual basis surpass the number of new permanent residents (Sharma, 2006), a

trend that has continued. In 2012, nearly 200,000 new temporary work permits were issued (ESDC) for employment in service and hospitality, caregiving, truck driving, and farm work, among other sectors. Canada's increasing reliance on foreign migrants was one of several concerns cited by Brussels-based global think tank Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) in their 2015 decision to downgrade Canada's immigrant integration ranking. Citing delays to family reunification and the achievement of permanent residency, MIPEX (2015) has echoed the Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement by explicitly recommending that Canada "provide more access to permanent residency for temporary foreign workers and irregular migrants".

As non-citizen workers, migrants are differentially included in Canadian society and legally subordinate to citizen workers (Anderson, Sharma, & Wright, 2009). According to Sharma (2012), it is "the "difference" that borders make" (p. 26) that brings migrant precariousness into being. Sharma suggests that whether one has state-sanctioned, legal immigration status in Canada or not, to be positioned as a "non-citizen" in Canada is to be pushed to the fringe—to be legally subjugated to citizens and rendered exploitable under a system of global apartheid. Here global apartheid is understood as an international system which sanctions the discrimination of subaltern groups based on nationality (Sharma, 2005). Looking domestically, Paz Ramirez (2013) contends that by differentiating between bodies-of-belonging entitled to certain rights and freedoms and bodies-out-of-place, the SAWP and other TFWPs replicate many of the conditions of an apartheid-like state. Both her and Sharma's arguments align with other critical reflections on Canadian multiculturalism such as Thobani's (2007) discussed above. Reconsidering Joy's (1982) characterization of Canadian immigration as a system of "concentric circles" (p. 55), whereby preferred immigrant groups are located in the center ring and non-preferred, racialized groups are relegated to the outer rings is also useful for

understanding the relationship between citizenship, immigration, and race in Canada as it relates to the recruitment of temporary foreign workers.

1.1.2. Harvesting transnational labour: Making migration ‘work’ for agriculture

Farm labourers constitute some of the world’s most marginalized workers (Weiler, 2014). In Canada, not only is farm labour traditionally seasonal and temporary, work schedules are “inconsistent, demanding, and unconventional” (Preibisch & Otero, 2014, p. 179). Wage structures for Canada’s farm labourers, many of whom never sign an employment contract, vary significantly with some earning below minimum wage for piece work and receiving limited to no benefits (Preibisch & Otero, 2014). Farm work is also a high-risk, even “hazardous” employment sector (Preibisch & Otero, 2014). Farmworkers confront numerous occupational risks on a daily basis, including the potential for workplace accidents that could result in injury, long-term disability, and unemployment. According to the Farm Safety Centre (2009), agriculture ranks as the third most hazardous occupational sector in Canada with the highest number of annual deaths. Long days of repetitive movements on work sites with dangerous equipment and exposure to chemicals may also give rise to chronic health issues. Many farmworkers report being rushed by their employers and supervisors, encouraged to work at unsustainable paces, sometimes while climbing up and down ladders and often without adequate protective gear (RAMA, 2016). For these reasons, farm work is commonly designated as three-D work, or labour that is “dirty, dangerous, and difficult” (Hennebry & Preibisch, 2010, p. e22), and government records support this characterization. In 2014 alone, WorkSafeBC documented 105 serious work-related injuries in BC agriculture and five farmworkers were killed in workplace accidents across the province. Country-wide, agricultural labour occupies the lowest rung of the occupational ladder and farmworkers have been historically excluded from provincial employment standards legislation that protects workers in other sectors (Preibisch & Otero,

2014). Moreover, the exclusion of farmworkers from employment protections has frequently coincided with exclusive immigration policies that disproportionately impact new immigrant and migrant populations employed in agriculture (Preibisch & Otero, 2014).

Looking globally, agriculture professes the longest historical reliance on state managed migration of any sector (Martin, Abella, & Kuptsch, 2006; Preibisch, 2010). To date, the United States and Germany have implemented two of the largest agricultural TFWPs. The Bracero program (1942-1964) saw nearly half a million Mexican farmworkers employed in the United States while at its height, Germany's Gastarbeiter program (1955-1973) recruited nearly one million Italian migrants (Preibisch, 2010). Although it would not be formally institutionalized until the creation of the SAWP in the 1960s, Canada's experience with state managed migration in agriculture dates back to the nineteenth century (Lanthier & Wong, n.d.). Migrant labourers of Japanese and Chinese origin seeded and cultivated many of British Columbia's first fruit tree orchards under the supervision of European immigrant landowners (Lanthier & Wong, n.d.; Wong, 1988). Today, migrant agricultural workers account for approximately 10 per cent of the total number of "temporary" "foreign" workers admitted to Canada on an annual basis (Tomic & Trumper, 2012). The vast majority of these migrant workers are employed via the SAWP, and some are admitted under the TFWP's secondary agricultural stream. While this ratio may seem negligible, Canadian producers' dependency on temporary migrant labour is such that Preibisch (2010) has contended that "without access to migrant workers, the horticultural sector in Canada would not exist in its present form" (p. 431).

1.1.3. Institutionalizing unfreedom: The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

Not uncontroversially, the SAWP's polemic 1966 introduction foregrounds the government's profound reluctance to bring black Caribbean workers to Canada. In Canada, lobbying efforts on

the part of Ontario growers' associations for regular access to seasonal foreign workers began as early as 1947 (Satzewich, 1991). Farmers in the fruit, vegetable, and tobacco industries, which continued to rely heavily on human labour despite ongoing mechanization and industrialization, were experiencing acute labour shortages in the post-war landscape (Basok, 2003; Clarkson, 2008; Russo, 2011). The consolidation of agricultural land holdings and associated increases in farm production capacity, combined with a substantive decline in the size of the average farming family also contributed to a structural shift in agricultural labour relations and intensified the need for hired farm labour (Basok, 2003; Satzewich, 1991). The percentage of Canada's total population employed in agriculture was also falling fast, decreasing from 29 per cent in 1941, to just 8 per cent in 1966 (Clarkson, 2008).

In an effort to address escalating agricultural labour needs and diminishing willing labour at the industry standards, the Canadian government piloted a number of immigrant labour initiatives. The creation of a foreign farm work exchange program for European students (Basok, 2003) was preceded by the recruitment of Polish war veterans and European labourers to work on Ontario farms (Satzewich, 1991). In the 1950s, the Canadian government reached an agreement with the pro-fascist government of Oliveira Salazar to bring Portuguese agricultural workers to Canada (Joy, 1982). Many of these efforts proved unsuccessful in the longterm, with immigrant agricultural workers such as those recruited from Poland either leaving farm work for other employment following the completion of their contracts or abandoning their contracts altogether (Basok, 2003; Satzewich, 1991). The early termination of immigrant workers' employment contracts contributed to perceptions that the agricultural sector was facing a new, structural labour shortage (Satzewich, 1991). However, as Hennebry and Preibisch (2010) note, labour shortages are not always present as a result of the absence of labour, but due to "the presence of workers prepared to reject the working conditions or wage levels offered" (p. e22).

The poor working and living conditions provided for agricultural labourers frequently resulted in them leaving their on-farm jobs and relocating to urban areas in search of other work (Basok, 2003; Satzewich, 1991).

The SAWP was envisaged to address these concerns. But despite intensifying labour challenges, the Canadian federal government was hesitant to implement a TFWP that would see Jamaican migrants employed for specific producers on Canadian farms. In his examination of intergovernmental memos in the years prior to the SAWP's introduction, Satzewich (1991) exposes the tension surrounding the temporary admission to Canada of black workers from the West Indies. Although publicly the debate to admit Jamaican farmworkers focussed on the severity of Canada's labour shortage, in private it was dominated by concerns regarding "race relations". Black Jamaicans' perceived biological and cultural incompatibility with Canada's European immigrant population was explicitly mobilized to justify the denial of Caribbean migrant agricultural workers' right to apply for permanent residency. As Satzewich (1991) shows, government documents also reveal an internal preoccupation with the potential for Jamaican migrants to cause border control issues for Canada such as those experienced in the United States. As late as 1958, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration expressed concern that, given Jamaica's membership in the Commonwealth, Canada may encounter legal challenges ensuring that Jamaican workers left the country at the end of their contracts. Clarkson (2008) surmises that restricting workers' access to permanent residency meant that "the rural labour shortage could be alleviated without leading to the then perceived dangers of widespread Black immigration to Canada" (p. 428). And so, even prior to the introduction of the SAWP, both migrant farmworkers' unfreedom in Canada and also their permanent temporality were justified on racial grounds.

This foreshadowing, reflected in the view that Jamaican migrant workers were culturally incompatible with “Canadians”, predates contemporary neo-racism in which processes of racialization are appended to the Jamaican body not in biological but in cultural terms.

According to an interdepartmental memo from 1947:

“The admission to Canada of natives of the West Indies has always been a problem with this Service and we are continually being asked to make provision for the admission of these people. They are, of course not assimilable and, generally speaking, the climatic conditions of Canada are not favourable to them.” (Quoted in Satzewich, 1991, p. 172: ‘Letter’ from Director, Immigration Branch, Department of Mines and Resources to Deputy Minister of Labour, 29 March 1947, PAC, RG 27, vol. 292, file 1-26-69-1, pt. 1.)

The potential for problems pertaining to “race relations” was not the federal government’s only concern. Paradoxically, internal documents also reveal the government’s ethical preoccupation with consciously instituting a program whereby participating migrant workers would be tied to an employer, thus legally prohibiting them from circulating in Canada’s labour market alongside Canadian workers. A particular memo from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration dated 1951 underscores some of the Canadian government’s principal concerns with managing foreign farm labour in this way:

“... as we are proud of the freedom experienced in Canada and must endeavour to maintain our present standards which are advertised abroad, it would not be feasible to impose a contract which would amount to virtual slavery.

... it is difficult to force immigrants to remain at farm work as this would closely approximate forced labour.

... A sounder means of control lies in facilitating the movement of races that experience has shown are likely to remain in agriculture... and tightening up on the screening of those races that tend to drift into occupations adequately provided for now.” (Quoted in Satzewich, 1991, p. 1)

Considering the strategic exclusion of black Caribbean people under federal immigration policy in the early nineteenth century (Calliste, 1993), Canada’s hesitancy to recruit Caribbean farm labourers is not unusual—rather, it is consistent with the policy of previous governments and reaffirms Joy’s (1982) contention that the Canadian government was committed to maintaining a level of racial purity in the new “Truth North”. Labeled “economic and social liabilities,” (Calliste, 1993, p. 133) black Caribbeans were viewed as biologically unsuitable not only for Canada’s climate, but also incompatible for integration in Canadian society and the state’s capitalist economy. Ultimately, and as described below, the SAWP provided a way for the Canadian state and its agricultural producers to capitalize on anti-black stereotypes inherited from the slave plantation era while preserving the nation’s white identity by denying Jamaicans the right to remain permanently in Canada. Fifty years following its polemic 1966 introduction, racist tropes that negatively typecast Jamaicans thrive in a Canada that continues to aggressively recruit Caribbean farmworkers while restricting their employment to the agricultural sector and refusing to provide them with a path to permanent residency.

Despite the clear relationship between the SAWP’s structural design and anti-black racism, one of the principal challenges that I faced in this project was that despite being everywhere present,

race was surprisingly absent from much of the literature. I agree with Paz Ramirez (2013) that contemporary Canadian scholarship on labour migration has largely overlooked or underemphasized the role of race in the creation of and justification for programs such as the SAWP. As is evidenced by Satzewich's (1989; 1991) studies, while some of the earliest work investigating Canadian immigration policy and temporary foreign labour centered race as an analytical category, many contemporary studies have employed a liberal approach, focusing instead on migrant rights and access to citizenship with no mention of race or racism (see Basok, 2003; Byl, 2010; Hennebry, 2012).

There are important exceptions to this rule. Aguiar, Tomic, and Trumper (2011) point to Canada's complicity in the creation of the labour force that it needs to maintain its own agricultural economy through its collusion in the economic restructuring of the global South and promotion of free trade. Still other scholars have applied a critical race lens in order to shed light on the mobilization of racialized discourses in the social and spatial mapping of the farm. For instance, Preibisch (2010) explores how farm work groups are segregated and "segmented" according to race, where workers of certain ethnic backgrounds and nationalities are hired to perform specific tasks based on perceived racial in/compatibilities. Likewise, McLaughlin (2010) shows how employer perceptions of race, gender, and citizenship, among other factors, contribute to worker desirability for Canadian farmers. Such perceptions are not limited to agricultural producers, but are also embodied and reproduced by workers themselves. As an organizer, I frequently witnessed both the tensions and shows of hospitality and solidarity that can occur between various groups of workers of different racial and ethnic makeups on farms employing migrant workers from more than one country of origin. Finally, at a conceptual level, this project has benefited significantly from Sharma's (2005; 2006; 2012) critique of the

nationalized border and clear articulation of the link between state racism, temporary foreign labour, and an international system of global apartheid.

While the last decade has witnessed a hopeful proliferation of critical research on labour migration to Canada and particularly the SAWP, this study aims to contribute uniquely to this literature. First, the majority of the SAWP literature concentrates on the experiences of Mexican farmworkers, who make up the bulk of program participants. Second, most studies are geographically limited to southern Ontario, the region with the highest per capita concentration of migrant farm labourers in Canada. Despite its geographical confinement to a single province, these studies have largely served to represent Canada's experience with the SAWP as a whole. Both because of its significance and due to the little investigation conducted in British Columbia, I lean heavily on this body of research throughout this study. Notably, none of the studies conducted in British Columbia have made the experiences of Jamaican migrants their central focus. Indeed, while there are several exceptions (see Hennebry, 2012; McLaughlin, 2010; Smith, 2015), nearly all of the recent scholarly work that has been conducted on the SAWP in BC focuses on the experiences of Mexican migrants, excluding those of Jamaicans (see Aguiar, Tomic, & Trumper 2011; Preibisch & Otero, 2014; Preibisch & Otero, 2015). Most popular articles featured in Canadian media also forefront Mexican farmworkers (see Ball, 2015; Stueck, 2012). I am concerned that the exclusion of Caribbean workers from these studies follows the marginalization of black labour and the invisibilization of black geographies in Canada, reproducing notions that Canada is "nonblack" or that "black in/and Canada" is somehow "surprising" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 91-2). I hope to contribute to this body of literature by focusing specifically on the governance of Jamaican farmworkers' lives in British Columbia as part of the very necessary work to expose the ongoing violence of anti-black racism and geographies of oppression in Canada in their contemporary forms (see Walia, 2014).

1.2. Study participation and data collection

This project is a product of both activist and academic labour. Throughout my Master's program, I have been active as a community organizer with Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture (RAMA), a migrant justice group that I co-founded in 2013. My role with RAMA allowed me to conduct nearly a year of preliminary fieldwork with migrant farmworkers during the design phase of this project before I formally undertook data collection. Ultimately, participants were recruited from two groups. The first group is comprised of Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed in the Okanagan Valley via the SAWP. Community organizers and advocates working with Jamaican migrant farmworkers constitute the second group of participants. Throughout this thesis, while I occasionally draw a distinction between “activist” and “academic” labour as I do here, I make deliberate use of the term “organizer” to forefront what I consider to be a significant divergence between the neoliberal construction of the renowned, individual “activist” (so often a “white saviour”) and the often nameless, faceless “organizer” who works within grassroots and worker-centerer initiatives, typically far removed from the limelight and with no personal gain. To complicate matters further, I recognize that my differentiation between migrant and organizer participants creates a false distinction between the two—many of the migrant participants in this project are themselves community organizers. I make use of the distinction for clarity's sake, at the unfortunate sacrifice of nuance. All of the participants in this project were previously known by me and recruited via personal invitation. Ultimately, six migrant farmworkers and five community organizers agreed to participate. I had regular, recurring contact with all of the participants in this project and conducted multiple, semi-structured interviews with each of them throughout the duration of this project.

1.2.1. Research site

The fieldwork for this project was carried out in the Okanagan Valley, a fertile agricultural region in BC's interior where I have lived for most of the past seventeen years and my family's history goes back further still. Yet despite this study's geographical focus on BC and the Okanagan Valley in particular, the historical context discussed in this chapter surrounding the SAWP's 1966 introduction in Ontario is significant for several reasons. First, while each province is responsible for the administration of the SAWP on an individual basis, the program itself is federal. Second, while the SAWP has come under growing criticism by labour and community organizers in addition to critical scholars, the program itself has changed very little in the fifty years since its introduction. Third, the initial debate and historical context surrounding Canada's incorporation of Caribbean labour is of particular interest to this project, especially given that the bulk of the scholarly literature focusses almost exclusively on Mexican labour (see, for example, Basok, 2003; Binford, 2009; Preibisch & Otero, 2014). The same holds true for the comparably little research that has been conducted on migrant agricultural labour in BC. Caribbean farmworkers, if they are mentioned at all, are perimetric (see, for instance, Aguiar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2011; Fairey, et al., 2008; Tomic, Trumper, & Aguiar, 2008). Last but not least, in contrast to the wealth of literature that examines Ontario's history of seasonal farm labour and introduction of the SAWP, little data exists on the incorporation of the SAWP by other Canadian provinces. This omission can be accounted for in several ways. Although a federal program, the SAWP is administered by each of the provinces individually. In British Columbia, which joined the program in 2004, scant research has been conducted on the conditions which led to the program's introduction. While filling these significant gaps in the literature is outside of the aims of this project, this project will shine a light into a few of these thus far ill-lit corners of BC's history.

1.3. Thesis overview

Subsequent to this introduction, in the second chapter of this thesis I lay the theoretical and methodological groundwork for this study. Using Foucault (1976) and Goldberg (2009), I stress the ongoing significance of race as a concept and the importance of critical race and intersectional theories to understanding migrant workers' domination in the Canadian context. I further expand upon the intrinsic relationship between race, immigration, and the state. Chapter two also contains a methodological sketch of this project, including a comprehensive overview of institutional ethnography as a feminist approach, my study recruitment and data collection procedures, work with RAMA, and relationship to this project as its author. The third chapter of this thesis contains a literature review of the SAWP, exploring its structure and governance, program commendations and critiques, and finally my own conclusions with regard to the SAWP's facilitation of transnational indentureship. In lieu of a spoiler and in line with Perry (2012) and others, I conclude that the SAWP continues Canada's colonial legacy in its exploitation and differential inclusion of negatively racialized migrant workers. Next, chapter five comprises both my analysis and discussion. In this section, I rely on interview data from Jamaican migrant farmworkers and community organizers to analyze the surveillance and disciplining of SAWP farmworkers employed in the Okanagan Valley. Ultimately, I argue that the SAWP farm site resembles Goffman's (1961) total institution in its efforts to regulate and control the behaviour of Jamaican farmworkers. Finally, the conclusion of this thesis provides a summary of the project as a whole. I tie together key points from my discussion and turn my attention to the nationalized border and its role in the creation and perpetuation of a system of global apartheid. I close with a discussion of what it means to cultivate justice for migrant workers, displaced peoples, and all those who cross borders in pursuit of safety, community, and better lives for themselves and their families.

Chapter 2. The colour of exclusion: Race, space, and the everyday

As we came to a stop in the dusty lot, I glanced around hesitantly. Were we in the right place? We had made the almost two hour drive in two cars, four RAMA organizers, one with her two boys. Even for the south Okanagan, it was a scorching summer day. I peered through the window. None of the workers we had agreed to meet were in sight. The fact that I had only spoken to one of them on the phone and never met any of them in person mattered little. In this town, four Jamaican men would be next to impossible to miss. I took a swig from my water bottle, pre-emptively hydrating, gathered the few things that I was sure to need—a notebook and pen, my cell phone, sunglasses, and water bottle—and braced myself for the heat before I swung open the door to greet the others. We waited nearly an hour, the four of us adults crowded together on a bench beneath a pair of low-leaning trees to shelter ourselves from the sweltering sun while the boys made a game of how far they could throw the coarse rocks they found in the gravel. When the guys finally arrived, they sauntered slowly across the barren lot towards us, talking and laughing easily amongst themselves. I waited until they were halfway across the gravel before I crossed the remaining empty space to introduce myself, hand extended. “Hey, what’s up. I’m Elise.”

Over the next hour, we talked work contracts and pay dates, Caribbean geography and food, living conditions on-farm in Canada versus at home in Jamaica. One of the guys’ principal concerns was how few hours they had been working. “We didn’t come all the way up here and leave our families to work three hours a day!” One of them tells us emphatically, exasperated.

There were four of them employed on their farm, but at this point in the season, there was clearly only full-time work for two. Their hours spoke louder than their contracts, which in 2014 demanded SAWP workers receive a minimum of 240 hours during a six-week work term in Canada. In the meantime, their employer had been deducting the stipulated daily sum of \$6.20 CAD for their accommodations from their pay cheques. As we continued talking, we agreed that their contracts were clear: an employer could only deduct this amount for housing on working days of four hours or more. With four guys working just three hours a day, they should not be paying for their housing. The housing deduction brought their daily income down to the equivalent of almost just two hours of work, an amount so negligible it was little wonder they were fed up. We discussed their options for moving forward. Did they want to talk to a reporter? Should I call the liaison? One of the guys had already come to a decision: he had had enough of Canada. He was going home.

Just when I thought things might be wrapping up, I spotted another well-dressed black man approaching in the distance. “Hey, looks like someone’s coming,” I said as I gestured with my chin in the direction of the new guy. “You guys know him?” They told us that they did. He was employed nearby, the only SAWP worker on his farm. We carried on the conversation as he approached. When he drew near to the group, I hesitated. Should I walk out to meet him, or wait until he joins us? After a brief pause, I crossed the narrowing space between us in a few quick strides and introduced myself. We shook hands.

It took some time before our newcomer, also from Jamaica and with two seasons of farm work in the south Okanagan under his belt, began to open up. Then, to my surprise, he laughed easily as he casually flirted with me. I parried his compliments with playful disapproval and by inquiring about his wife and family. His comfort with the other guys helped things along. After all,

there were not many Jamaican workers in the south Okanagan, and these guys knew each other well. Even so, he remained standing with me at the edge of the circle instead of joining the other guys on the bench beneath the tree. I asked how things were going on his farm. The conditions were rough, he told us, but he was getting by. He angled the conversation back at me with a wry smile, before suddenly turning serious. “You know,” he remarked, his eyes burrowing into mine through his thick-rimmed glasses, “You’re the first white woman I’ve spoken to since I got here.”

.

This chapter outlines the conjoined theoretical and methodological approaches I apply in this study. I articulate an analytical framework that combines critical race theory and institutional ethnography. In line with Smith (1975; 2005) and taking into account workers’ racialized positions and legal subordination in Canada, I explain my election to privilege the standpoint of Jamaican migrant farmworkers in order to map the workings of social power on the SAWP farm site, occasionally stepping off the farm to also explore how power operates in Okanagan communities as I did in the introduction to this chapter. I begin with an exploration of race and racism and relate these concepts to the state and migration in a world that proudly parades as colourblind. In the latter half of this chapter, I expound my use of institutional ethnography, relationship to this project as its author, and data collection procedures. Ultimately, I posit this project as an anti-racist, institutional ethnographic “study from below”.

2.1. Race and racism

Race has played a pivotal role in the organization of the modern world. Although the term “racism” did not emerge until after the Holocaust, by the eighteenth century, “race” had become

a matter-of-course (Rattansi, 2007). Viewed as a natural justification for the colonization of allegedly inferior peoples (Goldberg, 2009), race laid at the heart of colonial legal regimes such as terra nullius, which legitimized the claims of European states to Indigenous territories based on the logic that Indigenous lands were empty, despite indisputable evidence to the contrary (Miller et al., 2012). Race defended the use of genocidal tactics of extermination and the extinguishment of Indigenous title. It validated slavery, rationalized the reserve, and sanctified the residential school system. It cleared the way for Jim Crow and race-based segregation and facilitated the explosion of the prison-industrial complex (Wacquant, 2002), as well as conservative denials that such a complex exists. Last but not least, race and racism are central to the logic of the nation-state (Foucault, 2003; Goldberg, 2009; Sharma, 2006).

Yet centuries of purportedly justifiable exclusion and exploitation have done little to cement race as a concept. Rather, race remains obtusely elusive. This is in part because race is not static, nor is the history of racism linear (Smith, 2003). Just as racism is subject to “sharp changes of direction, its subterranean phases and its explosions” (Balibar, 1991, p. 40), race is flexible and ever-changing (Goldberg, 2009). Evolving racial markers, modalities, and hierarchies make racism perplexing to map. In his concise introduction to racism, Rattansi (2007) contends that “colour and racial categorization have a fluidity and instability very much at odds with the conceptions of strict and obvious biological difference implied by the notion of race” (p. 42).

Although our ability to point to racism has been hampered by shifting neoliberal terrain, contemporary racism, or what we might call ‘neo-racism’, is a systemic social problem. Delusions of arrival at the distant, utopian shores of a post-racial world and the attainment of raceless solidarity, made manifest in popular campaigns such as “We are all Trayvon”, (Giroux, 2012) obscure both oppression and privilege. The dismantling of affirmative action programs

and the general denigration of anti-racist agendas and their authors can also be traced to neoliberal origins through ascriptions to the post-racial and the construction of a liberal meritocracy. Indeed, under neoliberalism, structural injustices and inequalities have been made apolitical (Razack et. al, 2010). As Singh (2014) aptly argues, “Neoliberalism paints all social problems as individual problems.” The only place where race has been deemed to persist is in the minds of individual racists. Yet in contrast to what neoliberal ideology would have us believe, “racism is a social relation, not the mere ravings of racist subjects” (Balibar, 1991, p. 41). Disciples of neoliberal dogma conveniently point to the whitening of certain racialized groups (whose journey up the racial hierarchy has often occurred at the expense of other racialized communities) as concrete proof that racism, as a structural phenomenon, has ended. Moreover, the idea that racisms manifest themselves only in single moments in time, confined to neatly-bounded space, renders racist institutions, processes, and social relations of power less visible. In the words of Gada Mahrouse (2010) “race must be understood as an insidious conceptual and political structure, and not as an event” (p. 183). Racism supersedes the interpersonal, just as it defies temporal, spatial, and discursive confinement.

Especially in the present neoliberal context, calls to move beyond race as an analytical category have grown increasingly emphatic (Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi, 2008; Smith, 2003). Such calls are driven by two interrelated concerns. The first is the recognition to which I have already referred —namely that “race”, as a concept, is socially constructed (Davis, 2008; Rattansi, 2007; Smith, 2003). Contrary to race-thinking throughout much of modern history, race has no scientific or biological basis (Rattansi, 2007). In accordance with its flawed logic, race as an essential concept has no justifiable place in social science research. The second factor equally relevant to this trend is an appreciation that racism is not merely produced by race—race, as an

analytical category, is also a product of racism (Kobayashi & Johnson, 2007). Racism imbues racial categories with significance, in turn giving meaning to race.

This recognition, in conjunction with the long-overdue abandonment of essentialized notions of race, has contributed to the rejection of race entirely (Davis, 2008). In his book, perhaps misleadingly titled *Racism and Migrant Labour*, Miles (1982) argues that race belongs to Gramsci's "common knowledge" alongside folkloric and non-critical thinking. True to his Marxist roots, Miles suggests that "race" may be little more than a distraction—a device invented by the hegemonic, ruling class to keep the working class divided and manufacture consent for capitalism's ongoing exploitation of labour. Miles goes so far as to contend that social scientists' continued attention to "race" and "race relations" could be attributed, in some cases, to these scholars' own racist purviews. But by rejecting white supremacy's foundational role in the ongoing formation of nation, state, and sites of class relations, his theoretical footing becomes unstable. For like 'class', categories such as 'white' and 'black' are not mere labels referring to genetic or phonological stereotypes, but historical categories that are themselves interwoven with the politics of domination and ruling. Ultimately, his explanation reads more like a rejection of colour labels instead of a justification for the abandonment of critical race theory.

Indeed, while renunciations of the naturalness of race are laudable, calls for the erasure of "race" altogether are premature. Although any biological basis for the segregation of peoples according to essential, measurable characteristics has been long overturned, race continues to play a definitive role in carving our world (Fanon, 1963). It is a volatile mechanism that guides the arrangement of space and social relations, woven into the very fabric of the Westphalian order. The acknowledgement, especially in scholarly circles but also in many popular forums, that race is itself a social construct has thus done little to loosen its grip on reality. Consequently,

skirting race is not anti-racist, but merely anti-race (Goldberg, 2009). Meanwhile, in the “shadow of racelessness” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 52), further darkened by neoliberalism, racism has found a new stronghold.

Racism shapes discourse, policy, and the everyday, even as we deny its very existence. Race amplifies white voices over Black and Indigenous ones. Race intersects with gender, class, sexuality, and ability to justify the production of hierarchies and exclusion. As a modern determinant in the social organization of space and people, race is implicated in the segregation and exclusion as well as the differential treatment and inclusion of those identified as racial Others. It pervades institutions, processes, policy architecture, and social and interpersonal relations, extending from the structural to the everyday. Balibar (1991) differentiates between an “exclusive” and an “inclusive” racism. Where exclusive racism seeks to exterminate “inferior races”, inclusive racism is one of oppression which seeks to “hierarchize and partition society” (p. 39-40). According to Balibar, the racism accompanied by colonialism and slavery utilize a combination of both exclusive and inclusive mechanisms. Moreover, Goldberg (2009) disputes mainstream assumptions that racism always occurs in a vertical landscape. Rather, he suggests that new racisms are interlaced with the discourses and geographies of borders. Goldberg (2009) writes:

The mark of a racist expression or belief, then, is not simply the claim of inferiority of the racially different. It is more broadly that racial difference warrants exclusion of those so characterized from elevation into the realm of protection, privilege, property, or profit. Racism, in short, is about exclusion through depreciation, intrinsic or instrumental, timeless or time-bound (p. 5).

Yet racialized groups are rarely excluded absolutely—instead, they are incorporated into systems that depend upon their immobilization for the purposes Goldberg (2009) discusses above. Indeed, only focussing on how racism “marginalizes” people of colour can distract from the myriad of ways that matrixes of oppression actually posit racialized groups inside systems that come to depend upon the exploitation of their land, life, and labour (Freire, 2011).

Race is undoubtedly one of the most powerful, pervasive, and deadly of social constructions that persists today. Troublingly, while this recognition has resulted in its near elimination from popular discourse, our abandonment of race has not occurred at the behest of racial equality. Rather, racism thrives in the absence of race. As Fanon (1963) contends, alongside class, when “Looking at the immediacies of the colonial context, it is clear that what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race, one belongs to” (p. 5). In the context of international labour migration, this division is made manifest in the nationalized border.

2.1.1. Race, state, and migration

As already mentioned, race figures principally in processes of both nation- and state-building (Goldberg, 2009; Smith, 2003). Like the nation on which its earliest form was founded, the state is exclusive by nature (Foucault, 2003; Holloway, 1994). For the state to include insiders, it must discriminate against outsiders (Walker, 2006). Its governance of a national citizenry requires the exclusion of non-citizen Others. At times this rejection takes place within the specific territorial geography of the state and, at others, it takes a particularly diasporic and transnational tone by way of differential inclusion vis-a-vis imperialism and empire (Tölölyan, 1991). Historically, state-sanctioned discrimination, segregation, and genocide have occurred along racial lines.

Foucault examines the relationship between state formation and race in his 1976 lecture series *“Society Must Be Defended”*. Flipping Clausewitz’s classic adage on its head, Foucault asserts that “politics is the continuation of war by other means” (p. 48) and urges that we look beyond the state as a legal abstraction to its function. In delineating its sovereignty over a specific, exclusive populace, the state ultimately draws the line between what must live and what must die. This, Foucault argues, is the very basis for the justification of war. But the same mentality also forms the basis of racism. Racism, Foucault suggests, is “the break between what must live and what must die” (p. 254). It is interlaced with the very roots of state sovereignty. Racism is “bound up,” Foucault writes, “with the workings of a state that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race, to exercise its sovereign power” (p. 258). As Holloway (1994) surmises, “In short, the very existence of the state is racist” (p. 32).

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, racism has been fundamental to the historical justification of policies that exclude migrants and exploit their labour. If the modern state is imagined as governing a “discriminable population, with a single, bounded space” (Rouse, 1991, p. 10), international migration explodes this framework. Traditionally, the modern state has claimed to embody a single people who speak a single language, live together in a territory under a single sovereign power, and are governed by single legal system (Tölölyan, 1991). Against this backdrop, foreign migrants are cast as endangering the state and all that it stands for—its homogeneity, unity, impermeability, security, rule of law, and order. Migration represents chaos, heterogeneity, a return to the nomadic, a loss of control, or a sort of perdition. Migrants, in turn, are perceived as rebellious, in that their very movement across international borders challenges the sovereignty and authority of the state.

Not unlike the “state”, which tends to permeate our research uncontested, the category “migrant” is frequently taken as a given. Rarely is any concrete definition provided of who constitutes a migrant. Conventional differentiations drawn by scholars and policy makers alike between refugees, immigrants, and migrants contribute to the (re)production of distinctions which often overlook the role of the state in the creation of these subjectivities. As Sharma (2006) points out, the term migrant, as both a “legal *and* a social category” (p. 102), is in fact produced by the state and its borders. Nuanced definitions note that transnational migrants are made distinct from immigrants by their temporary status—that is, once their “legal” work contracts are complete, migrants must return to their countries of origin or risk becoming undocumented. In contrast, immigrants are distinguished in principal by their “permanent” and therefore somewhat less precarious legal status vis-a-vis their potential right to remain.¹

While the “difference” that motivates the discursive construction of “migrant” in contrast to “immigrant” or “refugee” ought not be totally disregarded, such definitions problematically forefront both choice and mobility, casting im/migrants as individuals or groups who *choose* to *move*. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) characterizes a “migrant” as representative of “all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of “personal convenience” and without intervention of an external compelling factor; it therefore applie[s] to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family” (IOM). Put differently, whereas refugees or trafficked persons have been *displaced*, migrants supposedly *place* themselves.

¹ I want to be careful not to overemphasize the difference between migrants and immigrants before the law. Without a doubt, the legal status of permanent residents in Canada—indeed, even that of Canadian citizens who possess citizenship elsewhere—is still highly precarious.

The reality is, more often than not, less clear cut. While the movement of many racialized im/migrant communities may not occur in response to some disaster or manifestation of physical violence deemed newsworthy enough to capture the attention of the West, many migrants are nonetheless displaced. Likewise, their movement is fiercely regulated in service of global capitalism and the neoliberal state. For negatively racialized and Indigenous communities, the decision to migrate is generally motivated not by personal convenience but by survival. As Satzewich (1991) points out, any definition that emphasizes individual choice or, as in this case, convenience, mischaracterizes many migrants' reasons for moving. Instead, he notes that, "[...] the decision to migrate either temporarily or permanently takes place in a context where structural constraints limit the degree of choice individuals or groups possess in the matter" (p. 37). In his pathbreaking ethnographic work on Mexican agricultural migrants to the United States, Seth M. Holmes (2013) also criticizes migration literature's foregrounding of migrants' personal motivations. According to Holmes, "Such a view [of migration] assumes a rationally acting individual, maximizing her self-interest and having control over her destiny through choice" (p. 17). This fuels efforts to change migrants' individual behaviour as opposed to addressing the greater structural injustices that create the need to move. Misrepresentations of the systemic issues that push so many people to leave their homes each year distract from the structural issues at hand and scapegoat the state governments and international bodies otherwise responsible for the assurance of these populations' collective wellbeing, not to mention the transnational cooperations, criminal gangs, and other groups responsible for displacement.

Yet as Holmes's critique also highlights, a migrant's racialized identity alone is not the only factor that dictates their social position. Theorists that combine critical race theory with historical materialism such as Fanon (1963) and Wallerstein (1996) suggest that in colonial capitalist

societies, race and class are mutually constitutive and that racial and economic inequalities tend to reproduce and reinforce one another in a vicious circle. These inequalities are especially evident in the division and segregation of space. As Fanon writes, in this “compartmentalized world [...] The cause is effect: you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich” (p. 5). Black feminist scholars also insist upon the interlocking nature of multiple, plural oppressions. In her enduring work on intersectionality, Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) critiques the dominant framing of discrimination as a product of discrete functions which occur along single axes involving either race, class, or gender. Such understandings, she argues, frame racism and sexism as neither simultaneous nor interlocking, but as unidimensional, independent, and divisible. By contrast, Crenshaw (1989) contends that concepts such as race, gender, and class are not mutually exclusive, but rather that they operate together to form a complex and multidimensional system of oppression. In her own engagement with Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins (1990) terms this intersection the “matrix of domination”. Nationality and citizenship (or lack thereof)—that is, the legal relationship that one has to a particular state, evidenced by the possession of a passport—while undoubtedly a racialized category, also constitute discrete and powerful forms of globalized social capital in the twenty-first century.

Employing an intersectional approach further problematizes the position of Jamaican migrants as black “foreign” workers in Canada. Anti-black racism, institutional and interpersonal, is a historical and present reality in both rural and urban landscapes in Canada. As evidenced by the SAWP’s controversial introduction, the federal government was not keen to bring Caribbean workers to work on Canadian soil (Satzewich, 1991). This is even more noteworthy when one considers the acute labour shortages the agricultural sector was thought to be facing at that time (Binford, 2009; Gabriel & MacDonald, 2014). Driven by the need for access to cheap labour, a sort of liminal tolerance towards Jamaicans was fostered. Allahar (2011) contends that,

“Just as slavery and indentureship are examples of how “race” was used to cheapen labor in the colonial era, the racial legacies of empire contribute today to the lived immigrant reality in the countries of advanced capitalism, where “race”, ethnicity and national origin continue to be used as social markers that target Caribbean immigrants as cheap, pliable and expendable labor” (p. 55-56). This historical undervaluing of black lives and labour contributes to the reproduction of cycles of economic injustice that disadvantage black families, communities, and states. In Canada, black Canadians not only continue to experience institutional racism—they often experience it at higher rates than other racialized groups in Canada. As Walia (2014) notes in her piece “Do black lives matter in Canada?”, 42% of hate crimes in Canada in 2012 were reported by black people. Black Canadians also face significantly higher rates of incarceration than other groups in Canada (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014). While Canada’s prison population rose by 17.5% between 2005 and 2014, the number of black men and women in Canadian prisons increased by a staggering 75% (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014). In comparison, the number of Indigenous inmates rose by 47.4% during the same period, making black Canadians the country’s fastest-growing prison population (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014).

In this context, popular mythologies that regard Canada’s treatment of black peoples as somehow exceptional falsify the country’s white supremacist past and present. For instance, choice mention of Canada’s involvement in the underground railway obscures its profiteering from the slave trade and importation of black slave labour (McKittrick, 2006; Walia, 2014), especially in the provinces of Québec and Nova Scotia. Indeed, the history of black Canadians is altogether unknown to the majority of the population. In and of itself, this absence is significant. As Goldberg (2009) writes, “If you are not memorable, if you have no worthy history, then you are deemed to have no claim not simply on national remembrance but on the nation-

state itself, because you are seen to have no place in it” (p. 24). The history and present reality of black Caribbean workers currently in Canada is no different.

2.2. Institutional ethnography and the everyday problematic

With the aim of discovering how the everyday lives of Jamaican migrant farmworkers in the Okanagan are organized, this study utilizes an institutional ethnographic approach. The purpose of an institutional ethnography, as articulated by Smith (2005), is to map a social order and its relationship to the everyday world by making visible the “extended social relations of ruling” (p. 29) at work in the various connected sites that shape local realities. A key assumption in any institutional ethnography is that the connections between these sites—the complete workings of social power—are only partially visible to those who move within these spaces. In contrast to mainstream studies, an institutional ethnography begins not by establishing a theoretical framework, but instead by selecting a standpoint from which to carry out a line of inquiry. In this project, that standpoint belongs to the Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed in the Okanagan Valley via the SAWP. Instead of allowing traditional disciplinary values to dictate this project’s priorities, my preliminary fieldwork provided the time and space for migrant farmworkers to orient this project towards their most pressing everyday concerns. My role as a researcher and organizer, then, was to articulate the linkages between these everyday, local realities and the structural and historical workings of power—to make some sense of the order of things (Foucault, 2002). It is this social order that constitutes the *object* of study in an institutional ethnography, not the people themselves. Continuing with the map analogy, Smith (2005) suggests that the product of an institutional ethnography should be useful and accessible to those who live in and navigate the world that the ethnography sought to map. As I carried out this project, I continually strove not to lose sight of this exceedingly important objective.

An institutional ethnography involves a shift in the locus of sociological inquiry from theory itself to that of the everyday (Smith, 1975). Smith (1975; 2005) contends that the purpose of this shift is neither to isolate the everyday from other spaces or spheres of inquiry nor to set up the everyday as an object of research, but to insist that the problematic, or the questions we pursue in our research, originate from the social organization of the everyday world. What we discover in the everyday is then linked to greater historical processes that are external to or hidden from sight within this locality. Conducting an institutional ethnography based on Smith's (1975) everyday problematic involves pulling the micro and the macro "into a relation of necessary interdependence" (p. 375), breaking down traditional disciplinary divisions and linking the everyday realities of local groups to historical social, political, and economic phenomena that for one reason or another, fall outside of their vision. Beginning a study from within the everyday as opposed to from a predetermined academic or theoretical standpoint challenges the colonial relationship between the researcher and the world by refusing to turn people into objects (Smith, 1975). In other words, the intention of institutional ethnography is to create "a sociology *for* people not just about them" (Holstein, 2006, p. 293).

While institutional ethnography may not have been designed specifically for women, it remains an inherently feminist undertaking. Smith (2005) notes that this methodology was born out of her "deep opposition" (p. 1) to the mainstream approaches that she had learned as a graduate student and sparked by her involvement in the women's movement. Conducting "feminist" research means adhering to a feminism that is more than method, movement, or ideal, and recognizing that feminism also comprises a way of seeing and interacting with the world—one that cannot separate knowledge from power or positionality. A feminist approach begins with the recognition that academic research is an organized political practice that takes place in a world inundated with traditional power hierarchies, values, and norms (Ackerly & True, 2010; Collins,

2000; Smith, 1974). Indeed, feminist scholars (Haraway, 1988; Smith, 1974; 2005) have long dismissed traditional methods of measuring academic authority which they contend have excluded the claims, knowledge, and lived experiences of marginalized peoples such as women and persons of non-cisgenders as well as black, brown, and Indigenous folks, among other excluded groups. Likewise, transnational and black feminists have also rejected mainstream academia's adherence to objectivity, which has been historically weaponized against marginalized groups of colour (Collins, 2000; Mohanty, 2003). Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi (2008) argue that white supremacy has so inundated the social sciences that much research is now conducted using processes and techniques based on a "white logic" (p. 17). According to the authors, white logic "grants eternal objectivity to the views of elite Whites and condemns the views of non-Whites to perpetual subjectivity" (p. 17). The first task of a feminist line of inquiry then involves the recognition that "knowledge is socially organized" (Smith, 2005, p. 27). As Ackerly and True (2010) write, employing a feminist approach ought to permit the researcher to prioritize research questions with the power to "make visible the invisible, to give voice to the voiceless, to make central analyses that are marginalized or neglected by mainstream lines of inquiry, and to bring to our attention processes and institutions that have been absent in the mainstream of our disciplines" (p. 57-58). As also advocated by Smith (1974; 1975), the process of revealing the workings of power that are otherwise hidden—often in plain sight—is central to a feminist approach.

This process requires the exaltation of participant knowledge. In this context, the knowledge of Jamaican migrant farmworkers is understood to be both situated and subjugated (Foucault, 2003; Haraway, 1988; Smith, 1974; 2005). My methodology rejects unidentified, supposedly omnipresent standpoints that claim to see and weigh all perspectives at once, or that employ "the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere", a vision that Haraway (1988) cuttingly

contends “fucks the world to create techno-monsters” (p. 581). Instead of recommending that we head for high ground for the best view of what is happening “down there”, I adhere to her perspective that we see what is happening more clearly from below “the brilliant platforms of the powerful” (p. 583). As Smith (1974) asserts in an earlier feminist critique of sociology, “The only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within. We can never stand outside it” (p. 11). That my privileged position unquestionably prevents me from standing “within” the world of Jamaican migrant farmworkers is not at issue. Jamaican farmworkers themselves are the keepers of their own knowledge and experience—they are the experts in their own everyday lives. Using an institutional ethnographic approach situates the Jamaican farmworkers with whom I have been working as this study’s official guides. To achieve this, and again following Smith (1974; 2005), my line of inquiry begins with the everyday and centers the experiences and perspectives of migrant farmworkers themselves.

2.2.1. Reflecting upon my positionality

According to Hoey, ethnography is a “mutual product born of the intertwining of the lives of the ethnographer and his or her subjects” (p. 3). Despite historical attempts to divorce researchers from their projects for the sake of objectivity (Hoey, 2014), as its author, this project has been unquestionably shaped by me—my lived experience, perspectives, and identity. Perhaps most notably, this project has been impacted by my ostensible privilege as a white “Canadian” woman. Working primarily with black “foreign” men throughout this project, the difference that difference makes was often uncomfortably apparent as workers and I traversed various spaces together, geographically in the Okanagan and discursively in our conversations. Because of my role as an advocate, this project has also both benefited and suffered somewhat as a result of my dual role as an activist and a researcher. My care and concern for workers’ well-being and for their families intensified the emotional labour exerted in this study. When I was not writing

about migrant justice or researching migrant labour, I was driving for hours across the valley to visit workers on-farm, fielding calls at all hours from workers in crisis situations, communicating with their families “back home”, and strategizing with RAMA organizers for upcoming campaigns and events.

In any institutional ethnography, exploring the contrasts between insider and outsider, privilege and oppression, and subjectivity and objectivity is an important part of maintaining its transparency and authenticity. First and foremost, I am a white, straight, able-bodied and cisgendered woman of ostensible class privilege engaged in grassroots activism with precariously employed, racialized communities. While none of these subject positions ought to be read as fixed, in the social context of the Okanagan Valley, it is important to note that these identities are hegemonic, perceived as static, and largely taken for granted. My privilege is not only a result therefore of my rather obvious embodiment of these identities, but by the values and norms to which they are attached in the Okanagan and by my subsequent categorization as “normal”. In the eyes of the average resident, I “belong” in the Okanagan. In contrast, my Jamaican migrant worker friends (or, one might argue, black persons more generally), are perceived as out of place, surprising, or threatening. Thus, at the same time that my privileged position elicits amiability, trust, and personal freedom, the subjugated position of the Jamaican migrant farmworkers with whom I work was perceived as warranting their surveillance and regulation, often at the expense of their personal and collective liberties.

My sense of “belonging” in the Okanagan is both rooted in and complicated by my family’s longstanding relationship to the valley and experiences with the border. My father’s family, of Icelandic heritage, has lived for several generations in Canada. My mother, on the other hand, was born in 1955 to Canadian Mennonite parents living in Chihuahua, Mexico. In 1957, when

my mother was two, my grandfather resigned his position managing a cheese factory and my grandparents left the Mennonite colony where they had resided some thirty years, bringing their growing family (my mother was the fifth of nine children) to southern Manitoba. My grandfather found work at a cannery and for a decade, the family struggled to reintegrate into Canadian society, a task that proved particularly challenging for children raised in a Mennonite colony now transitioning into the public school system. In 1966, having learned of farming opportunities in western Canada, my grandparents packed up their family and headed west to work for a season in Oliver, BC, at Covert Farms. Looking back, my mother and aunts refer to this experience as a “working adventure” for them and their parents. After a summer of pruning grape vines and digging up root vegetables, the family returned to Manitoba.

Through this project, my mother’s Mennonite history, experience with im/migration, and the time her family spent in the Okanagan have found new significance for me personally. In 2015, on a trip south through the valley, I visited Covert Farms. Current owner and manager Diana Covert and I spent an hour pouring over yellowing time sheets searching for my family’s employment records until we found the page pictured below displaying the time stamps of my mother’s family recorded June 29th, 1966. Nearly fifty years later, today Covert Farms’ website surprises visitors with an unlikely sight for the Okanagan Valley: under the “About Us” section, on a page entitled “Farm Hands”, visitors can see a photograph of nearly the entire Covert Farms team—including several Mexican migrant farmworkers employed via the SAWP. Today, I am building a more complex relationship with borders myself as I travel back and forth between Nicaragua and Canada with increasing frequency, but one that forefronts my privilege. At the same time that Caribbean and Latin American farmworkers must be approved through the SAWP for employment in Canada and conform to strict rules regarding their work permits and visas, I live, move, and work freely in Nicaragua on a tourist visa, no questions asked. Moreover, while I am

certainly not read as “belonging” in Nicaragua as I am in the Okanagan Valley, the racial politics of that space privilege my whiteness and foreignness in some equally powerful and problematic ways (see Lancaster, 1991). The same privileged relationship to borders holds for my mother's family who, as white Canadians, were able to move back to Canada from Mexico in the 1950s without legal difficulty.

NAME		HOURS		TOTAL		WEEKLY		WEEKLY	
NAME	INITIALS	HOURS	RATE	TOTAL	WEEKLY	WEEKLY	WEEKLY	WEEKLY	WEEKLY
C. McCall		582	1.35	78.27	78.27	78.27	78.27	78.27	78.27
J. Hilario		25	1.35	33.75	33.75	33.75	33.75	33.75	33.75
M. Lopez		19	1.35	25.65	25.65	25.65	25.65	25.65	25.65
M. Schwartz		60	1.25	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00
Z. Baker		44	1.25	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00
L. Santana		72	1.25	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00
M. Lima		70	1.25	87.50	87.50	87.50	87.50	87.50	87.50
A. Friesen		40	1.25	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
D. Friesen		62	1.25	77.50	77.50	77.50	77.50	77.50	77.50
A. Friesen		31	1.25	38.75	38.75	38.75	38.75	38.75	38.75
E. Fredgaard		70	1.25	87.50	87.50	87.50	87.50	87.50	87.50
D. McCall		33	1.25	41.25	41.25	41.25	41.25	41.25	41.25
J. Foster		55	1.25	68.75	68.75	68.75	68.75	68.75	68.75
C. Jamet		50	1.25	62.50	62.50	62.50	62.50	62.50	62.50
M. Hilario		24	1.10	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40
L. Santana		24	1.10	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40
M. Lima		24	1.10	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40
M. Friesen		24	1.10	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40	26.40
D. Andrew		42	1.25	52.50	52.50	52.50	52.50	52.50	52.50
W. Chahley		42	1.25	52.50	52.50	52.50	52.50	52.50	52.50
H. Mante		64	1.25	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00

ILLUSTRATION 1. COVERT FARMS TIME SHEET, 1966

Second to my personal positioning this project, in what ultimately constituted one of the study's core strengths, my dual role as an activist and researcher both propelled and complicated this study methodologically and logistically, sometimes in unexpected ways. Without a doubt, the personal relationships of trust that I developed with workers were essential to the success of this project. Because of these pre-established relationships, at no point during this project did I attempt to “access” workers or recruit participants via their employers. Each and every person

who chose to participate in this project was known by me personally through my community organizing work with RAMA.² Even so, I felt that the administrative and academic burden I carried as a “university researcher” placed my personal relationships with workers, many of whom I consider friends, at risk. I fought not to formalize interviews, which I felt were set up to be more like “transactions” than authentic conversations. Within this context, it is important to keep in mind how few genuine, horizontal relationships workers develop with local white residents during their work term in the Okanagan. This infrequency was often explicitly highlighted, with affectionate comments from workers such as, “You really like black people, hey, Elise?”. I was also rightly concerned with both workers’ safety and job security as well as the distinct possibility that I may burn personal bridges with local residents in the process of disseminating project findings. With the ultimate goal of doing more good than harm, there came a point when I considered scrapping this project all together for the sake of workers’ safety and so as not to jeopardize the personal relationships of trust we had built together through my work with RAMA.

In the few years that I have been working as an organizer, spending time on- and off- farm with Latino and Jamaican migrant workers, I have been regularly confronted by what it means to be an ostensibly privileged white woman advocating for visibly racialized men and women of colour. This has led to a heightened awareness of not only the social positions I occupy and particularly my whiteness, but my body. In Holmes’s (2013) anthropologic exploration of social suffering amongst Indigenous Mexican migrant farmworkers in the United States, he devotes considerable space to a reflection on how power is inscribed onto bodies in light of the differential treatment he and his migrant compañeros received. In a particularly uncomfortable

² It was always made explicitly clear to participants that this thesis project was associated with UBC Okanagan, had no formal relation to RAMA, and that their decision to participate in this project (or not) would not affect their personal relationship with me or with RAMA.

experience eating at a fast food restaurant with a group of migrants, he writes, “My body was treated as though it had and deserved power, whereas theirs have been treated repeatedly as underlings, undeserving of respect” (p. 36). And again, “After many months of living, eating, seeking medical treatment, and driving with migrant workers in the United States, it became clear that everyone around us recognized my body as belonging in a significantly different place in our society’s power structure than did the bodies of my Triqui friends” (p. 37). Such experiences occurred with uncomfortable frequency and will be explored in chapter four.

Not without a bit of irony, the same whiteness and privilege that mediated my relationships with racialized research participants, undoubtedly written throughout these pages, also allowed me to carry out this project in relative safety. I write “relative” safety so as not to deny the profound tension with which I was confronted, sometimes violently. At one point in the summer of 2014, several members of RAMA were chased off a farm property with a pipe by the nephew of an employer who had previously received us warmly. We opted not to pursue legal action so as to protect the jobs of the workers involved. At other times, in an effort to acknowledge our privilege as Canadian citizens, I have commented to workers who were appreciative of my and RAMA’s work that we have no excuse not to act, since we cannot be deported or sent home for causing trouble.

2.2.2. The Okanagan Valley

As briefly discussed, the principal site for this project is the Okanagan Valley, where approximately 1,500 SAWP farmworkers were employed in 2011 (Aguilar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2011). A dry yet fertile region in the interior of Canada’s western-most province of British Columbia, the valley comprises the traditional ancestral territories of the Syilx speaking Okanagan people on whose unceded lands the first Western European “gentlemen farmers”

began to settle in the late nineteenth century (Lanthier & Wong, n.d.; Bunn, 2015). Indeed, it was the region's cultivable land and pleasant climate that attracted many of the first British and German settler farmers (Joy, 1982). Stretching from the Spallumcheen Valley in the north to Osoyoos in the south, today the valley boasts some 5,436 farms and is one of Canada's largest fruit-producing regions (COEDC, 2015). Aside from being replete with invisible social borders and boundaries that generally carve out spaces, the Okanagan Valley is also a territorial borderland that itself traverses the Canada-United States border, extending well into the state of Washington.

In many ways, the Okanagan has been historically cultivated to be a sleepy, politically and socially conservative agricultural belt. Farming maintains a romanticized profile as an almost sacred practice, associated with traditional family values, nation-building and the (supposedly peaceful) settling of Canada, and a humble life of hard work and personal sacrifice (Aguiar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2011). In the imagination of local residents, the practice of farming and the people who have dedicated their lives to agriculture in Okanagan communities are not only beyond reproach, but merit our empathy, respect, and gratitude. In addition to its virtuous representation in the popular psyche, farming is viewed as central to the Okanagan's geographical, economic, and social landscape. After moving to the Okanagan from the Kootenays with my parents and sister at the age of ten, I recall taking the bus to school each morning as it wound through acres and acres of rolling orchards. For my part, I grew up in the Okanagan Valley. Although I am putting the final touches on this project from Nicaragua, the Okanagan has long been "home" for me. Orchards, like sagebrush, are viewed as intrinsic to and representative of the Okanagan terrain—natural, and imbued with meaning, value, and a history in which many locals take pride and root their identity.



ILLUSTRATION 2. CITY OF KELOWNA COAT OF ARMS (WWW.KELLOWNA.CA)

Often left out of popular narrations of the Okanagan's agricultural history is the valley's historical reliance on largely invisible, racialized migrant labour to meet the needs of its growing industry. As briefly mentioned in the introduction to this thesis and in spite of their near erasure from popular memory, many of the Okanagan's first horticulturalists were Chinese (Tomic & Trumper, 2012). Subsequently, Japanese families comprised a significant portion of the agricultural labour force in the early 20th century, before being replaced by Portuguese immigrants in the 1950s (Lanthier & Wong, n.d.). Following farm-working families' eventual shift to land-owning producers, valley-wide labour shortages were filled by thousands of French Canadian youth arriving from Quebec, who between 1977 and 1981 grew to constitute the largest group of farmworkers in the Okanagan (Lanthier & Wong, n.d.; Tomic, Trumper, & Aguiar, 2008). In contrast to the Latin American and Caribbean workers now available for hire through the SAWP, French Canadians garnered a reputation as less reliable and "disciplined" than foreign workers

(Tomic, Trumper, & Aguiar, 2008, p. 79), a value judgement that has partially facilitated their replacement by a foreign, unfree, and therefore more disciplinable migrant labour force. The 2011 federal funding cut to the Okanagan French Employment Service Centre in the South Okanagan further decreased the flow of French Canadians traveling to the Okanagan, prompting the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association (BCFGA), which represents more than 760 farms across the province, to issue a "labour shortage" warning.

Today, the Okanagan Valley's inhospitality towards racialized, supposedly "low-skilled" agricultural migrant workers contrasts starkly with its reputation as a world-class vacation site. Recent decades have seen the Okanagan Valley and the adjacent Thompson region transformed into a prominent destination of international rapport, drawing more than 3.5 million visitors each year (TOTA, n.d.) to its sandy beaches, ski resorts, golf courses, and wineries. A current marketing campaign by the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association dubbed "Okanagan Bucketlist" has included the installation of enormous billboards at the region's international airport that read, "You've arrived. Now make the most of it" (www.okanaganbucketlist.com). Aguiar, Tomic, and Trumper (2005) contend that the city of Kelowna, the valley's most populous urban centre of roughly one hundred and fifty thousand residents, has been "reinvented" in such a manner that emphasizes "place, play, and fun" (p. 123). Indeed, the reigning ideology of the day in the Okanagan Valley is "Work hard, play hard"—that with your labour comes the reward of being able to kick back, relax, and enjoy all that the Okanagan has to offer.

Notably, while the majority of the field and ethnographic work for this project was conducted on the ground in the Okanagan Valley, this project cannot be easily confined to a single space, place, or scale. Jamaican migrant farmworkers maintain numerous concurrent relationships

which stretch across boundaries and borders as they themselves move through multiple transnational spaces. I draw upon both Smith's (1975) and Datta and Brickell's (2012) novel concept of *translocality*, which foregrounds migrants' "situatedness during mobility" (Datta & Brickell, 2012, p. 3) at the same time that it does not lose sight of the global processes to which their movement is pinned. Thus, "Instead of exploring the spaces and scales of the locale, [translocality] grounds the local as simply a site of negotiation of the global — a place where globalization is experienced by local actors" (Datta & Brickell, 2012, p. 5). Moreover, some of the Jamaican farmworkers included in this study and most migrants in general have been employed in multiple regions of British Columbia such as the Fraser Valley or the West Kootenays, in addition to other Canadian provinces, most notably Ontario but also including Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Alberta. Meanwhile, the advocates that contributed their perspectives to their study themselves engage in "transnational" work in their support of farmworkers and their families before, during, and often extending long after migrants' work term in Canada has ended. Therefore, central to this study is the understanding that we are a product of motion, rarely only grounded in space and place, but always both here and there, situated and moving.

2.2.3. Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture (RAMA)

This project was facilitated in no small part by my ongoing work with migrant farmworkers as a community organizer with Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture (RAMA), or Red de Apoyo para Migrantes Agrícolas in Spanish, a migrant justice group based in the Okanagan that I co-founded in 2013. I first became involved with migrant farmworkers in the summer of 2012 during a summer work contract for the Lake Country Museum, a cozy repository of artifacts and archives in Okanagan Centre. The museum's archives mainly pertained to the community's agricultural history. As a part of my contract, I photographed and interviewed a group of Mexican farmworkers at a cherry orchard in Lake Country to document their experiences working in the

Valley. It was during this period that I also reached out to the Agricultural Workers Alliance (AWA) and Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW), two of Canada's most prominent not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGO) fighting for migrant rights, to learn more about the situation of migrant farmworkers in Canada. I will never forget the first call I had with an organizer at the AWA from the Fraser Valley—I hung up the phone and wept in anger and shame at what was happening in my community.



ILLUSTRATION 3. RAMA LOGO (WWW.RAMAOKANAGAN.ORG)

I launched RAMA in the first semester of my Master's studies with Amy Cohen, a friend and colleague at Okanagan College. Our goal (somewhat lofty, for a team of two) was to support the approximately 1,500 Latin American and Caribbean “temporary” migrant farmworkers employed across the Okanagan Valley in their everyday lives. Now in our fourth season, today RAMA is governed by a collective of eight dedicated members, supported by two student fellows, and relies upon an extensive network of volunteers. Our work is grounded in a set of collective principles that reiterate our commitment to feminist anti-racist praxis, Indigenous sovereignty, and migrant justice. On the one hand, we engage in direct support work and accompaniment to ensure workers' everyday needs are met, facilitating their access to social services and helping

them navigate local communities. RAMA also carries out political advocacy, with growing municipal and provincial campaigns pertaining to workers' housing and healthcare, and promotes public education in Okanagan communities through workshops, teach-ins, and forums. Over the past four seasons, RAMA has succeeded in establishing two English language hubs that double as inclusive spaces for workers to socialize and meet local residents, with two more launching in 2016. Building inclusive spaces is integral to our longterm strategy and vision for the Okanagan Valley. Together with workers, RAMA members and volunteers cook and share meals together, run errands, go dancing, and play sports, among other activities. For RAMA, socializing together in public spaces around the Okanagan is profoundly political and constitutes an important part of fostering migrants' sense of belonging as we re-organize our communities and entrench radical inclusion. Our work is grounded first and foremost in relationship with one another and with workers. Our aim, as a group, is to be worker-led.



ILLUSTRATION 4. AUTHOR TEACHING ENGLISH WITH GROUP OF MEXICAN MIGRANT FARMWORKERS IN 2013

2.2.4. Study recruitment, participation, and data collection

This project involved numerous in-depth, semi-structured interviews with two groups of participants. This study's principal participants are Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed via the SAWP in the Okanagan. The second group constitutes community organizers and activists working alongside Jamaican farmworkers in Canada. The five community organizers that participated in this project represent three distinct groups including RAMA, J4MW, and one which shall remain confidential. Four of five of these participants are based in the Okanagan Valley, while the fifth works out of the province of Ontario. While J4MW is not currently active in BC, the organization has a long history of working with Caribbean migrant farmworkers across the country, including in the Fraser Valley. Many of the workers with whom they collaborate have been at some point employed in the Okanagan Valley.

Due to the risks associated with participating in a research project of this nature, I intentionally minimized the number of formal Jamaican migrant farmworker participants. As one Jamaican migrant participant pointed out during our interview in 2014, his simple participation in a research study could be enough to jeopardize his employment in Canada. All in all, just six Jamaican farmworkers served as the primary informants for this project. In all cases, we had numerous conversations, including preliminary discussions, formal interviews, and follow-up conversations over the course of three years (including preliminary fieldwork). Of these six participants, two were women and four were men. Participants varied in age from their twenties to their fifties. All six participants were able-bodied, in so much as was necessary for them to carry out difficult, physically-demanding work as agricultural labourers. While workers' sexual orientations fell outside of the scope of this project, to the best of my knowledge, each participant is straight. Most were married, with spouses and children at home in Jamaica.

While formal interviews varied in length from twenty-five minutes to an hour and a half, they were often sandwiched on either side by extensive time with migrant participants as we would take the opportunity to run errands, go shopping, or share a meal together. My privileged knowledge of community services and geography, possession of a vehicle, and well-established social network, not to mention my role as an organizer with RAMA, meant I was often called upon to assist with other tasks. Particularly due to most workers' very limited access to transportation, it was often unspoken but generally understood that I would be available to assist them in this manner. In these instances, it was sometimes agreed to in advance that we would conduct a number of other errands together on the day of the interview, while on other occasions these activities would occur spontaneously before and after the interview. And so while my research design called for interviews to last one hour, the actual time I spent with migrant participants on the day of our interview varied significantly and extended for as long as six hours. In these instances, only the formal interview was audio-recorded with participant consent. However, as I often found that workers were keen to continue, expand, or critically reflect upon a topic of conversation we had begun during our interview, I frequently took note of follow-up thoughts or comments that workers shared with me outside of the formal interview. With workers' consent, some of these comments have been included in this thesis.

Protecting participant identities has been at the forefront of mind throughout this project. To protect workers' identities, I have opted to include only the year and not the specific day or month of my interviews. Jamaican farmworkers' names have also been changed and new names assigned to each participant. As much as possible, I have endeavoured not to edit their comments, leaving some as a mix of English and Patois. As two of the organizers I interviewed shared similar concerns with regard to their privacy and for consistency's sake, I have also included only the year of my interviews with community organizers.

Because of my role with RAMA and established networks within the migrant justice movement in Canada, recruitment for this project was very straightforward. Most invitations to participate were delivered in person. All invitees were given an extended period of time to reflect on their decision to participate—upwards of a week or more. Moreover, all participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. After his formal interview and fearing for his job, one Jamaican farmworker expressed concern that I would expose his participation in this project. When I suggested that he withdraw from the study, he back-pedalled and insisted that I include his comments in the final project (field notes, 2014). I have done as he asked and retained his contributions to this project, but his suspicion of me aptly illustrates the degree to which workers are instructed not to “cause trouble” and to remain “on guard” during their time in Canada—a psychological errand which deters them from getting to locals and reaching out to advocacy groups. Through my work with RAMA, all of the participants in this project were previously known to me and me to them. While some may argue that personal ties with research participants compromise the objectivity or legitimacy of an academic undertaking such as a Master’s thesis, a feminist approach recognizes the centrality of relationships of trust to conducting accountable research projects, especially with marginalized groups (Collins, 2000). Indeed, following Smith (1974), regardless of whether I should wish to “remove” myself from this study, as its author, I am an indivisible part of this project. In a similar vein to Collins (2000) therefore, I treat my activist and academic work as inextricably linked.

As anticipated, a significant part of this project involved listening to workers’ stories and experiences of racist abuse as they expressed their pain, indignance, and rage in response to their reception both on and off farm. Jamaicans are of course not the only farmworkers who experience racism in the Okanagan Valley—in one instance in 2014, a group of Mexican workers in the North Okanagan explained how drivers repeatedly slowed down their vehicles

and yelled at them from the highway, telling them to “go home” (field notes). Another group of Mexican men, fortunate enough to have an apartment in the city, reported being afraid to leave their apartment at night because people in the streets were rude to them and told them to “go back where they came from” (field notes, 2014). While racism remains an experience that is shared by racialized persons of many backgrounds, its expressions vary significantly and Jamaican farmworkers are the target of specific forms of racism informed by anti-blackness.

As an institutional ethnography, one of my objectives with this project was to chase the questions given to me by migrant agricultural workers themselves. At times, these questions were spoken directly—in defiance, anger, and bitterness. “*Why don’t farmworkers in Canada have any rights?*” (field notes, 2014). Other times, they were implied, hinted at, or gestured to indirectly, and I was left to unpack them myself. “*Freedom is like a stream. When it goes up it goes up and then it comes back down. But it goes wherever it wants*” (interview with Jamaican farmworker, 2014). Sometimes farmworkers simply gave me answers and I had to ask them to take me back, to teach me the question. “*You know who Nelson Mandela is, Elise?*” (interview with Jamaican farmworker, 2015). I learned that these questions, the ones buried at the bottom of the bin, were those that many migrants typically dared not ask aloud—questions workers whispered to each other in a crowded bunkhouse in the dark of night following a roll call by an aggravated employer—questions many migrants answered only with dignified silence—questions they refused to articulate for fear of their jobs, their families, their survival. At times, in response to particular questions (especially those concerning race and colour), a worker would answer me with simply, “*You know the answer to that question, Elise*” (field notes, 2015). Consistent with an institutional ethnographic approach, Jamaican migrant farmworkers’ own questions and the answers we discovered together form the foundation of this project and the heart of this thesis.

Chapter 3. Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

“Eight days a week. And if there's a ninth, we work that one too.”

“So everyday, all week,” I summarized, nodding in acknowledgement. “And if you want a day off?”

Carl shrugged. “Sometimes you get it, if you want it. But if not, you keep going. Sometimes you have no days off in the month.”

“And when you finish work for the day, do you get a chance to go out much?” I asked. “Can you tell me a little bit about what your life outside of work is like in Canada?”

A look of discomfort passed over Carl's face. He leaned back in his chair and shook his head.

“Not really. Your privilege going out after work is a no-no. Totally no-no. Anyways, you wouldn't get a chance to have free time. You work hard during the day. After work, you just have enough time to go home, rest, cook, prepare whatever you need for tomorrow, and sleep.” Suddenly Carl smacked his lips and pulled his hands up from under the table, setting them down in front of him. “It's more like—you're not on vacation. You're on a work program. And it's not wise to be like, I don't want to use the word 'loose cannon', but it's not wise to be up-and-up being that you're on the program and you are being watched. Yeah, there are opportunities [to go out], but it's not advisable really. If it's personal, fine. If you're going to get a few things at the store. Yeah,

I would go have a beer, but as I said—”

“—It’s not advisable,” I interrupted.

He nodded in agreement. “It’s not advisable,” he repeated.

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This chapter examines the structure and governance of Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP.) In agreement with the most critical literature, I contend that in spite of its rosy depiction, the SAWP ultimately capitalizes on longstanding racism to facilitate transnational legal indentureship. I begin by providing a structural overview of the SAWP and its administration before turning to examine the ways in which the SAWP falls short of upholding workers’ rights and dignity.

3.1. Program structure, governance, and administration

Of the nearly 40,000 migrant agricultural workers legally employed on farms across Canada in 2012, some 30,000 were contracted through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) (ESDC, 2014). The oldest and longest standing of Canada’s temporary migrant worker programs (TMWPs), the SAWP was conceived as a pilot program to facilitate annual, circular labour migration to meet the needs of Canada’s expanding agricultural sector. Since its introduction, the SAWP has expanded steadily and attracted global attention for its unique, bilateral administration, involving high levels of both sending and receiving states’ governments (Preibisch, 2010; 2011), and its collaborative management in Canada between industry, provincial and federal government bodies, and the consular and liaison offices of sending

states. Today, the SAWP is the most commonly utilized of four contemporary agricultural streams of the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and a mainstay of Canada's agricultural economy.

As already discussed in detail in the opening chapter of this thesis, the SAWP emerged on the crest of a wave of similar programs in the post-World War II era (Russo, 2011; Satzewich, 1991, Vosko, 2013). Designed to harness non-citizen labour to fill perceived labour shortages, the SAWP was enacted in 1966 via a Memorandum of Understanding between Canada and the Caribbean Commonwealth (Paz Ramirez, 2013). Its first year saw some 264 Jamaican farmworkers employed on an Ontario tobacco farm (www.jamliser.com, 2013). The SAWP's steady growth has been facilitated by the expansion of Canada's agricultural sector in conjunction with key federal policy changes and the program's incorporation by additional provinces. Shortly following the introduction of the NIEAP in 1974, the SAWP was expanded to include Mexico and the Organization of East Caribbean states (Paz Ramirez, 2013). Following the NIEAP, the number of agricultural migrants employed through the SAWP doubled in just two years following the removal of the program's annual cap in 1987 (Preibisch, 2010). The SAWP utilizes a system of forced rotation—that is, in order to remain eligible to participate in the program in subsequent seasons, migrants must return home at the end of their contracts and prior to the expiration of their visas on December 15th (Preibisch, 2011), working a maximum of eight months per calendar year in Canada. Once “home”, workers hope and pray to be “named”, or personally selected by their employers and approved by their liaison officer, to return. Today, while Mexicans comprise approximately half of the total migrant workers employed through the SAWP (Clarkson, 2008), the number of Caribbean agricultural workers coming to Canada is once again on the rise (Henry, 2013).

In Canada, the SAWP falls under the legal jurisdiction of the *Immigration and Refugee*

Protection Act, while at the federal level, it is administered by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), formerly Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). In Jamaica, the program is also administered federally by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and in Mexico, the Secretaria de Trabajo serves as its principle governing body. The ministries of respective sending countries are responsible for the recruitment, screening and interviewing, inscription, and, ultimately, the contracting of men and women deemed fit to participate in the program. Both foreign governments are represented in Canada and intensely involved in the day-to-day administration of the program vis-à-vis the Jamaican Liaison Service and the Mexican Consulate. Notably, Jamaican workers are required to subsidize program administration costs themselves. Five per cent of each pay cheque earned by Jamaican migrant farmworkers in Canada is recouped by the Jamaican government and earmarked for the liaison service. Participating Canadian provinces also play a significant, albeit highly variegated, role in the SAWP's administration (Hennebry, 2012), and both employers and migrant farmworkers fall under provincial jurisdiction in the arenas of health and employment law (Preibisch, 2004).

Otherwise, workers' participation in the SAWP is governed by the SAWP contract. Each year, workers and employers sign a new contract, which attributes a wide range of responsibilities and obligations to both parties. The 2016 agreement between British Columbia and the Caribbean Commonwealth includes specific stipulations pertaining to: scope and period of employment; lodging, meals and rest periods; payment of wages; deductions from wages; insurance for occupational and non-occupational injury, disease and illnesses; maintenance of work records and statements of earnings; travel and reception arrangements, obligations of the employers; obligations of the worker; early cessation of employment; financial undertakings, and; governing laws. A final section of miscellaneous items contains provisions in case of worker death in Canada or the loss of a workers' personal property due to fire. The contract may

not be altered without the “express written permission of the government of Canada, the government agent, the employer and the worker” (Agreement, 2016).

The SAWP contracts differ significantly from one province to another. One of the most notable distinctions pertains to the provision of worker housing. While Ontario employers are obligated to provide lodging at no cost to workers (SAWP Commonwealth Caribbean Ontario, 2014), in British Columbia, Caribbean workers must pay their employer \$6.20 CAD per working day for their accommodations, to a maximum of \$682 CAD per annum. Likewise, Mexican migrant agricultural workers in British Columbia must pay their employer \$5.36 per working day for lodging, up to an annual maximum of \$826 CAD. The terms of these contracts are negotiated annually at a high-level meeting between the sending and receiving state governments with Canadian employers (McLaughlin, 2009). These meetings often see slight amendments made to SAWP contracts, such as adjustments to reflect raising wages in Canadian provinces. Historically, migrant workers themselves have been excluded from the process of contract revision.

3.2. A model program for the world?

In recent years, the SAWP has garnered a reputation as a “model” for the world (Basok, 2007; Government of Canada, 2010; 2015; Hennebry & Preibisch, 2010; Martin, Abella, & Kuptsch, 2006; McLaughlin, 2009; Lenard & Preibisch, 2012; Preibisch, 2011). In a 2010 speech before the Canadian House of Commons attended by Mexican President Felipe Calderón, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper praised Mexico and Canada’s deepening partnership and noted that the SAWP was “widely recognized as a model for international labour mobility arrangements” (Government of Canada, 2010). Barndt (2008) takes this commendation a step further in her analysis of the global tomato industry, calling the SAWP the “crème de la crème of

migrant worker schemes in North America” (p. 160). But has the SAWP earned its reputation as the proverbial pick of the crop among temporary migrant labour regimes?

As industry and government representatives frequently remind us, the SAWP certainly has its advantages—some of which arguably benefit employers and workers alike. A demand-based, employer-driven program, producers have praised the SAWP for providing a just-in-time labour force (Aguilar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2010; Hennebry & Preibisch, 2010) that meets the flexible and often unpredictable needs of agricultural production, particularly in the fruit, vegetable, and tobacco industries. The SAWP’s longevity and its facilitation of cyclical employment has also been perceived as a plus. While many TMWPs globally have undergone significant reform or experienced disruptions in the post-Cold War era, the SAWP has continued without interruption since 1966 (Preibisch, 2010). Moreover, the program’s high rate of annual return, with many workers participating for a decade or longer, often with a single employer, has also been looked upon positively (Preibisch, 2010). Not only is it perceived as providing employers with the stability and continuity they might have with a “permanent” “local” workforce, in rare cases, workers’ annual return to a single community permits them to foster and maintain personal ties and some semblance of transnational community. In contrast to undocumented migrants, SAWP workers are also supposedly guaranteed many of the same basic rights as Canadian workers, such as compensation equal to or greater than the provincial minimum wage and health insurance (McLaughlin, 2009). As will be discussed later, whether or not these rights are realized on the ground is another matter altogether.

The SAWP’s benefits not only for workers and employers, but for both state economies, has earned it its reputation as creating a “triple win” scenario (Gabriel & MacDonald, 2012, p. 99). Even at the minimum hourly wage, the income earned by migrant farmworkers during their

annual stint in Canada is substantially higher than could be earned during an equivalent work period in their countries of origin. Earnings in Canada are stretched in Mexico and Jamaica, and used to cover the costs of school uniforms and transportation, small business expansions, housing upgrades, and purchases for migrants' own farms (field notes). With the bulk of this money heading "home" in the form of remittances to family and loved ones, the communities and state economies of migrant-sending countries also benefit. The World Bank (2013a) estimates that remittances to "developing" countries have more than quadrupled since the turn of the century, amounting to \$401 billion of officially recorded flows in 2012 alone (2013b). Meanwhile, for producers, the SAWP provides employers in Canada with legal access to otherwise inaccessible transnational labourers. In British Columbia, the relief provided by "foreign" labour is regarded as having saved the province's agricultural economy from total collapse (Tomic, Trumper, & Aguiar, 2008). The monies spent in the communities where migrant farmworkers live and work in Canada—for example, on the everyday necessities of life and gifts to take home to family members—also have a notable impact on rural economies (Basok, 2007).

With these factors in mind, the SAWP has curried increasing favour with other industrialized, migrant-receiving countries, and especially the United States (Walia, 2010). In contrast to undocumented or "irregular" labour migration and the cumbersome H2-A program, the SAWP is viewed as having successfully created organization out of the perceived chaos of northbound migration from Mexico and Central America. For instance, in what represents a considerable divergence between the H2-A and SAWP regimes, the SAWP administration involves much higher levels of state government and should preclude private agents from the recruitment process (Preibisch, 2004). Izaguirre (2003) argues that "the participation of both the Canadian and Mexican governments in the SAWP has ensured that labour mobility is carried out in a safe,

legal, and orderly fashion” (p. 3). Indeed, the program boasts a 98% return rate, with very few workers overstaying their visas and remaining in Canada *sin papeles* (Izaguirre, 2003; Preibisch, 2011). Ultimately, the notion of preserving migrant workers’ temporary status by barring their permanent settlement and residence in Canada is key to understanding the program’s sunny depiction internationally, particularly by policymakers and government officials from other migrant-receiving states in the North for whom control is a decisive factor.

3.3. Criticisms

Taking these elements into consideration, the SAWP still leaves much to be desired. Applying a human rights-based approach to temporary migration management as established by groups such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and International Labour Organization (ILO), Hennebry and Preibisch (2010) argue that the SAWP ultimately fails to live up to its “exemplary” reputation (p. e23) and instead “leaves migrants open to exploitation, vulnerability, and abuse” (p. e30). The authors cite the program’s failure to meet what is required for a rights-based approach, such as mechanisms to facilitate worker transfer to another employer, access to permanent residency, and the provision of skills training for migrant workers. In summary, the authors conclude that “contrary to much of the rhetoric, the reality of the Canadian SAWP falls considerably short of being an inspirational model, and instead provides us with little more than an overstated and often celebrated ideal” (p. e34). The failure of the Canadian government to live up or even aspire to international standards of human and migrant rights, is exacerbated by the program’s poor administration. As was made clear to me time and time again throughout this project and will be discussed in the following chapter, consular and liaison officials are often more preoccupied with “securing the employment market” than actually protecting workers’ rights or advocating on their behalf (Preibisch, 2010, p. 416). Put plainly, “Federal agencies have created a jurisdictional void in their poor coordination of the

SAWP with other governmental agencies. As such, the SAWP is not protecting workers' rights" (Fairey et al., 2008, p. 6). Indeed, RAMA frequently finds itself caught in a game of "Whose law is it anyways?", with municipal and provincial levels of government pointing to federal bodies at the same time that the federal government returns responsibility to the provinces for ensuring migrants' workplace rights are upheld.

Under the marquee of the SAWP and comparable to other TMWPs, migrant agricultural workers to Canada are generally perceived to be precisely that—*temporary* seasonal agricultural workers. Yet as Hennebry (2012) demonstrates in her recent study, migrant farmworkers are in fact "permanently temporary". While migrants' average stay in Canada is four months (Martin, Abella, & Kuptsch, 2006), many return annually and spend the majority of each year—up to eight months—on Canadian soil. Some make consecutive annual journeys to Canada every year for decades (Hennebry, 2012; Hennebry & McLaughlin, 2010). As a result, many migrants spend considerably more time in Canada than in their country of origin over the course of their ongoing employment. Providing a "legal" avenue for the return of the same workers, the SAWP effectually facilitates the continual opening and closing of a revolving door for foreign workers, most of whom will never be eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship. Hennebry's apt description of SAWP workers as "permanently temporary" puts a critical twist on the adage, "There is nothing more permanent than temporary workers" (Martin, Abella, & Kuptsch, 2006, p. 53).

Re-casting migrant workers as in fact permanent, regardless of their status as "temporary" non-citizen workers and especially considering their characteristic return to the same rural farming communities year after year, raises a host of concerns surrounding their integration into Canadian society, maintenance of family ties, and emotional health. In many communities,

migrant workers live and work in astounding isolation. As one worker casually related regarding his experience going back and forth between Mexico and Canada: “When I go home, my family asks me, ‘What’s Canada like?’ And I tell them, ‘I don’t know’” (field notes, 2014). In his seven years employed in the Okanagan, he had seen naught but the farm where he was employed, the long, winding road to the nearby town of Vernon, and the local grocery store. Effectively cut off from both their home and host communities, many migrants profess to feeling that they have been abandoned on Canadian farms (Aguilar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2010).

The SAWP has also been criticized for separating workers from their families for months at a time, year after year, while simultaneously targeting workers with dependents. To even qualify, Mexicans applicants must have dependents at home. However, the SAWP makes no concessions for workers’ families, who do not have the option to apply for additional visas and so are restricted from traveling together to Canada as a family. Requiring migrants to leave their spouses and children behind severely curtails migrants’ familial and social responsibilities during their work period in Canada (Preibisch & Encalada Grez, 2010), making them more available for the unpredictable shift work upon which much of the agricultural sector relies. As discussed in chapter four, many migrants report feeling that they are expected to be at their employer’s beck and call, available to work on little to no notice even in the evenings once their formal (and often very long) shifts have ended (field notes). Without their families, migrants have no family dinners to cancel, birthday parties to miss, or sick children or ailing relatives to care for. Hennebry and Preibisch (2010) suggest that intentionally forcing SAWP participants to leave their families at home serves to further deter migrants from overstaying their visas by “going underground” in Canada. Married migrants are also far less likely to pursue permanent residency vis-à-vis marriage to Canadian citizens (Preibisch, 2007).

The primacy of recruiting migrant labourers that will meet the very particular needs of Canadian employers and the state under neoliberal capitalism is evident during the selection process in migrant-sending states. McLaughlin (2010) shows how producers, state governments, and migrant farmworkers themselves simultaneously collaborate and push back against one another to construct an optimum migrant subjectivity that ultimately best serves the interests of globalized capitalism. Central to this subjectivity is migrants' perceived *disciplinability*—that is, both the recruiting state and the hiring employer must be assured that a worker will cooperate with the rules set before them in order to meet a strict set of constructed expectations. As one Ministry of Labor official in Mexico remarked, “They have to be accustomed to a certain way of living, because in Canada, you cannot leave the farm without warning your employer” (quoted in McLaughlin, 2010, p. 85). In Jamaica, officials are primarily concerned that once in Canada, workers will keep their heads down, comply with the law, and obey their employers to the fullest extent of the word (interview by author with migrant farmworker, 2015).

Recent research has increasingly highlighted the SAWP's numerous other shortcomings. These range from general concerns surrounding workers' vulnerability to exploitation (Aguiar, Tomic, and Trumper, 2010; Hennebry, 2012; Walia, 2010) their geographical, cultural, and linguistic isolation (Hennebry, 2012; Preibisch & Encalada Grez, 2010), access to health care (Hennebry 2008; McLaughlin, 2009; Preibisch & Otero, 2014), frequently intensified by their lack of access to transportation (Fairey, et al., 2008; Gabriel & MacDonald, 2011; Hennebry, 2008; Horgan & Liinamaa, 2012) as well as ongoing ethnic- and gender-based discrimination and segregation (Preibisch, 2010) and the Canadian government's failure to meet international labour, migrant, and human rights standards (McLaughlin, 2009). The frequent provision of racially segregated, substandard housing for migrant farmworkers is also a serious concern (Aguiar, Tomic & Trumper 2011; Hennebry & Preibisch, 2010; Tomic, Trumper & Aguiar, 2008), as is the

formidable power exercised by employers over workers' daily lives (Clarkson, 2008; Sharma, 2006).

Indeed, employers' control over workers is central to the SAWP's perceived success. As they typically live on-farm and frequently in housing adjacent to that of their employer or supervisor, migrant farmworkers are subject to intense surveillance. Workers' temporary immigration status in Canada extends the power imbalance beyond that which customarily exists between opposing classes, such as between landowners and citizen workers. As a demand-driven program, the SAWP also grants employers formidable say in which workers remain in and return to Canada for subsequent seasons. Based on employers request and the liaison's agreement, SAWP workers are re-hired via a naming process—that is, each individual worker is either selected to return or their employment is silently terminated when they are not called back. This process offers significant advantages to employers who are able to handpick and effectually guarantee the return of the previous season's "best" workers. Nevertheless, it provides employers with yet another means of pressuring workers into compliance and disciplining workers who do not conform to the farm's behavioural codes of conduct or meet a single employer's particular expectations by threatening not to bring them back (Basok, Belanger, & Rivas, 2013). The need to acquire a positive review from their employer and their respective consular or liaison officer in order to secure their position in the program for the following season acts as a powerful disciplinary apparatus that severely deters workers from not only speaking out against abuse and exercising their legal rights (Preibisch, 2010), but also from accessing those few social benefits to which they are entitled, such as health care in case of an injury or illness. Indeed, not only do employers possess the authority to name workers who are then re-hired, they can also choose to arbitrarily dismiss workers who are then deported (Clarkson, 2008; Hennebry & Preibisch, 2010; Preibisch, 2010; Sharma, 2006), which is

“euphemistically termed repatriation” (Hussan, 2016). According to FARMS, “Early cessation” due to a breach of contract is constituted by “Non-compliance, refusal to work, or any other sufficient reason to terminate”. In instances of early “repatriation” or deportation, workers have little to no legal recourse to dispute their dismissal. As non-citizens, it is not only their employment that is in jeopardy—workers’ legal right to remain in Canada is always at stake, a condition of their employment of which workers themselves are acutely aware. The early termination of an employment contract increases the likelihood that a worker will not be brought back in subsequent seasons. This double-edged deportability, which gives farmers the power not only to deport workers from Canada but also to preclude their return through legal avenues, effectually sets up employers as immigration gatekeepers to Canada. Ultimately, while the actual number of early repatriations among agricultural migrant workers in the SAWP has remained consistently low, the threat of deportation serves as a powerful disciplinary mechanism producing migrant workers’ compliance—and their silence (Preibisch, 2010).

Under the SAWP, workers are also prohibited from working outside of the agricultural sector, effectually eliminating all labour mobility. Relocating to another farm requires the authorization of both their present employer as well as that of the employer to whom they would like to transfer. When considered in conjunction with the naming process, one can see how migrant workers’ proclivity to bargain for improved working conditions or to negotiate workplace conflict would be severely reduced. Before a migrant worker refuses to carry out a dangerous or hazardous task, before they report an illness or injury or stand up to an abusive manager, they first consider whether the issue at hand is worth jeopardizing their employer’s favour and, by extension, not only their present job, but their coveted access to future employment in Canada (field notes). Migrant workers’ inability to quickly and easily change employers also acts as a disincentive for producers to both reward workers in the course of completing their daily tasks and to invest in

improving their working or living conditions. In other words and as Aguiar, Tomic, and Trumper (2010) have contended, employers need not seek the favour nor the approval of foreign workers, who make up a disposable, bonded work force valued only for their labour power.

These concerns taken together, numerous scholars (Russo, 2011; Satzewich, 1991; Trumper & Wong, 2010) have shown that the SAWP reifies a particular form of unfreedom in its creation of a bonded work force with negligible labour mobility, characterizing the program as akin to indentureship (Preibisch, 2010) in its facilitation of “transient servitude” (Walia, 2010). In her work on the formation of migrant subjectivities under global capitalism, McLaughlin (2010) argues that migrant-receiving states create what she calls “systems of exception” whereby non-citizen labourers are partially or comprehensively denied access to certain rights and freedoms reserved for citizens alone. Indeed, as also evidenced by this chapter, the SAWP has been denounced for its dependence on and reproduction of particularly draconian mechanisms of social control (Basok, 2013; Encalada Grez, 2006; Paz Ramirez, 2013; Preibisch & Encalada Grez, 2010). The intensity of the discipline and surveillance to which many migrant farmworkers are subject by their employers, consular officials, local community members, and even fellow workers, is in some cases reminiscent of Orwell’s *1984*. Taking into account deeply troubling concerns surrounding migrants’ exploitation, isolation, housing, and access to basic rights in Canada, I contend that the program reifies a particular form of racial unfreedom predicated upon citizenship-based segregation. It is but one embodiment of apartheid in Canada—and the latest iteration of institutional racism under global capitalism and border imperialism (Walia, 2013).

3.4. Conclusion

In the fifty years since its introduction, the SAWP has become structurally integral to Canada’s agricultural economy. For politicians and international organizations in search of solutions to the

“problem” of transnational migration, the SAWP has alluring appeal. The same is true of industry. For many farm producers, the program has proven lucrative. For others, access to migrant labour has kept tree fruit from rotting in the orchard unpicked. The SAWP has also facilitated the expansion of BC’s wine industry (Stueck, 2011). Meanwhile, the program provides critical employment and income for migrant workers and their families as well as economic stimulation for Canada’s agricultural communities (Basok, 2007). But although the SAWP offers considerable benefits, its failures of governance and oversight in addition to its disregard for human, labour, and migrant rights are cause for serious concern. Allegations of abuses range from the sexual harassment (interview with Amy Cohen, 2015) and segregation of migrant farmworkers (Preibisch, 2010), to union-busting and black-listing on the part of foreign consular officials (Sandborn, 2011; UFCW, 2012). With this in mind, I contend that at the very best, the SAWP constitutes an outdated and makeshift response to the combined challenges of changing agricultural labour relations in the post-World War II era and the shifting colonial logics that rendered unfree labour less accessible. Even with recent changes to the federal TFWP, the Canadian government’s continued silence with regard to the SAWP and the human rights situation of migrant farmworkers in Canada is troubling (Hahn, 2014). This lack of attention, positive or negative, paid to migrant agricultural workers not only reflects Canadians’ general ignorance of the SAWP, it also underscores the federal government’s implicit belief that this stream of the TFWP is working without issue (Hahn, 2014). The words of migrant farmworkers themselves paint a more complex and disturbing picture. Ultimately, the SAWP perpetuates the super-exploitation of racialized labour and ultimately facilitates a legal form of transnational indentureship.

Chapter 4. Slavery without the whip: The Okanagan Valley SAWP plantation

Jacob pursed his lips. “If someone was to tell me that I was going to live a life like this, I would have told them, ‘it’s a lie’. It’s like I’m a kid, needing to ask permission to go or do wherever or whatever I would like to do. If you want to go somewhere, you should be able to go freely, as long as you go to work and perform the same as you always do.”

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Expanding upon my opening contention that Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program facilitates a form of transnational indentureship, this chapter relies on ethnographic interview data to examine the carceral governance of Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed via the SAWP in the Okanagan. I argue that the contemporary SAWP farm site constitutes one of those “peculiar institutions” (Wacquant, 2002, p. 41) where racialized unfreedom predicated upon the control of black migrant farmworkers’ bodies and labour continues to thrive today. I build upon the theoretical component of this thesis by linking racism and Canada’s settler colonial history to the segregation, exploitation, and domination of Jamaican farmworkers on Okanagan farms.

4.1. Surveillance, discipline, and panoptic power

To begin, it is worth noting that this project’s central themes emerged quickly, long before my data collection was complete. These themes form a roadmap for understanding not only Jamaican migrant farmworkers’ lives in the Okanagan Valley, but the unique social relations

produced on the SAWP farm site and the practices of social control to which workers' are subject.³ The enactment and enforcement of rules, both explicit and implied, that govern Jamaican farmworkers' relationships, work and leisure time, and ability to leave the farm site or receive visitors, led all of my study participants to compare their lives under the SAWP to "modern day slavery" and "prison life" (numerous interviews by author).

Pointedly, while there are a host of legal issues structurally inherent within the SAWP that must be addressed, the lives of Jamaican migrant farmworkers in the Okanagan Valley are not governed by the policy pertaining to their employment or immigration status alone: migrant farmworkers' legal unfreedom is also buttressed by a complex regime of extra-legal social codes. These codes, or "counter-laws" (Foucault, 2003, p. 223) in Foucauldian terms, function in the shade of the legal system as racial technologies of disciplinary power that constrain workers' everyday behaviour, dictating the organization of their lives in such a way that the racialized body is "reduced as a political force and maximized as a useful force" (p. 221). While enforcing obedience and producing conformity, these disciplines or "general formulas of domination" exercise "meticulous control" (Foucault, 1995, p. 137) of the body through incessant and coercive vigilance. Technologies of disciplinary power and panoptic surveillance extend to nearly every aspect of workers' daily lives, regulating their behaviour on and off farm in addition to their interactions with each other, their employers, and the communities where they live and work in Canada. In this context, panoptic surveillance refers to Bentham's (2010) "power of mind over mind" (p. 1). Panoptic surveillance is carried out in such a way that it wields profound

³ Importantly, while the first-hand accounts detailed below comprise the unique and deeply personal stories of six individual Jamaican farmworkers who undoubtedly possess their own perspectives, their experiences are not exceptional. Instead, they provide us with a glimpse into a uniquely *shared* experience that does not belong to these workers as individuals, but is constitutive of the shared social, racial, and national identity of Jamaican farmworkers in Canada. In spite of the heterogeneity of Jamaicans as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991), once in Canada, Jamaican farmworkers are reduced to fit a very narrow identity in Canada and homogenized in their treatment under the law, by employers, by local residents—and of course, by researchers.

psychological power in addition to the potential it carries for real consequences, with those under its gaze believing that they are being watched at all times. Foucault (1995) notes that although Bentham designed this “ingenuous cage” (p. 205) for use in a new penitentiary architecture, as a “political technology” it has broad applications as “a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men” (p. 205).

As workers’ testimony reveals, such amplified surveillance and disciplinary power are essential to the productive functioning of the SAWP plantation. In line with Wacquant’s (2002) reworking of Stamp’s (1956) “peculiar institution”, the SAWP farm site depends upon joint processes of “extraction of labour and social ostracization” (Wacquant, 2002, p. 44) of its racialized workers. The SAWP and workers’ daily lives on-farm have been organized to maximize Jamaican migrant workers’ exploitability during their work term by assuring they are always available at their employers’ beck and call and to regulate the perceived racial threat posed by black Jamaicans to the Canadian nation-state. Jamaican workers’ conformity is guaranteed by their legal subordination to Canadian workers and the constant threat of deportation. Ultimately, my findings support the characterization of the SAWP as perpetuating a racist logic that capitalizes on the diminishing value of racialized foreign labour and the SAWP plantation site as a totalizing institution.

4.2. (Un)free labour and the SAWP

As discussed in chapters one and three, SAWP farmworkers constitute indentured labourers in Canada. Jamaican workers’ unfreedom in Canada and their characterizations of the SAWP as akin to modern day slavery is linked to an international system of global apartheid and Canada’s own practice of colonialism towards Caribbean peoples. In his article “Troubling “Project Canada”: The Caribbean and the making of “unfree” migrant labour”, Smith (2015) critically

examines the SAWP as an expression of Canada's practice of empire and what he terms its "racism-imperialism nexus". Pursuant to his central thesis that the imperialist logic of Canada's foreign policy forms the political mainframe that justifies the continued existence of the SAWP and in a similar vein to Satzewich (1991), Smith argues that the SAWP relies on labour unfreedom inherited from colonial times (p. 275). He connects Canada's exclusionary immigration policy and its foreign policy towards "the darker nations" (Prashad, 2008) to a larger racial project, where "Racialization proves a decisive factor in Caribbean temporary labour migration to Canada: racism explains the differential incorporation of Caribbean foreign labour; the geopolitical alliance of transnational whiteness privileges Canada over the Caribbean, and white rules supreme in a system of global apartheid" (Smith, 2015, p. 286).

Satzewich (1991) explores the relationship between "free" and "unfree" labour in his book *Racism and the incorporation of foreign labour: Farm labour migration to Canada since 1945*. In contrast to free labour, he contends that "Unfree labour is a concept which refers to relations of production where direct political/legal compulsion is used to acquire and exploit labour power, or where labour is constituted as the private property of another and therefore forms part and parcel of the means of production." (p. 42) Satzewich goes on to note that simply adding the dimension of wages—that of wage labour, which is generally understood to be the primary factor which differentiates free labour from slavery—is not adequate to make labour truly "free". Notably, in what is now reputed as one of the foundational works on the SAWP, Basok (2003) suggests, "Ontario fruit and vegetable towers require not merely labour that is cheap but labour that is unfree - unfree to circulate in the labour market and unfree to refuse to work when required" (p. 16).

Workers themselves frequently spoke of “freedom” as they reflected on the differences between their lives in Canada and their lives in Jamaica, generally agreeing that they were not free in Canada. In one of my first conversations with Jacob, a Jamaican migrant farmworker with whom I had recurring conversations over the two years of my fieldwork, I asked him what it meant to be free. He responded by indicating a duck swimming in the lake nearby.

“To be free [is to] go about, do whatever... he or she likes. No bondage. See? That duck isn’t in a cage. We have a curfew time, Elise. Remember, each of us here is over eighteen years old. But still we have a curfew time. We are not allowed to sleep out. We are not allowed to communicate with whomever we would like to. If you should even have a relationship, they don’t like [it].” (Interview by author, 2014)

In addition to these extra-legal codes often enforced on farm sites, SAWP work permits, which legally restrict migrants’ ability to circulate in the labour market or exit the agricultural sector, also reveal a correlation between slavery, unfree labour, and temporary labour migration (Smith, 2015). While the degree of brutality and physical violence used to govern the lives and bodies of black workers under the slave system has diminished, a similar logic remains (Smith, 2015). This is highlighted in Jamaican’s characterization of temporary work in Canada as “slavery without the whip”. Moreover, in his advocacy work, J4MW organizer Chris Ramsaroop draws a link between perceptions of the black Other and the treatment of Caribbean farmworkers in Canada.

“When we talk about the black Other, there is always this idea of revolt, of threat to every aspect of the family life of white Canadians, and this entails

both constructing a form of economic control that currently exists in the workplace, the fear of black men to white women, and this constant idea that they have to protect white women and do so at all costs, therefore regulating the bodies of black men in the rural communities. And the idea, both of moral and physical inferiority—that these workers are only able to undertake physical labour, and somehow because of climatic reasons—because of racial-biological reasons—the black body is only accustomed to undertaking manual work and serves no other purpose within our society. So all of this plays a central role in determining the social position of specifically black farmworkers within Canadian society.” (Interview by author, 2015)

The political and legal compulsion that transfigures Jamaican migrants’ unfreedom is intensified by workers’ precarious immigration status in Canada. As discussed in the opening chapter of this thesis, migrant farmworkers employed via the SAWP enter Canada with a closed, temporary work permit that allows them to work on select farms which have been pre-approved by ESDC. Transferring between farms, while theoretically possible, is nevertheless exceedingly difficult. The majority of workers I spoke with were hesitant to even request a transfer for fear of being perceived as “causing trouble” (numerous interviews by author, 2014). In this context, “causing trouble” could be as innocuous as speaking up when you should keep quiet, requesting a few hours off to visit the doctor, or initiating a transfer to another farm. As one worker explained to me, “causing trouble” is essentially a stand-in for anytime the boss takes issue with a worker: “Like, say for example, he is having problems with the way you function around him or the way you function on the job. Sometimes it’s not necessarily you the worker who is a problem. If he doesn’t like you, he’s gonna find all kind of problems with you” (interview

by author, 2014). In all cases, workers were keenly aware that “causing trouble” was to risk being sent home and not being brought back in subsequent seasons.

Taking into account migrants’ foreign status then, Sharma (2006) argues that migrants are differentially included in Canadian society and their labour is regulated in a different manner than that of permanent immigrants. According to Sharma, “constructing people as foreigners has not resulted in their exclusion from Canadian society. Limits to immigration, then, lay not so much in the ability of state to restrict people’s geographical mobility but to restrict their freedom once they are *within* nationalized labour markets” (p. 25). Not coincidentally, it is migrant workers’ ability to leave their country of citizenship and be employed in another state as “temporary” and “foreign” that accounts for the international organization of their racialized unfreedom (Smith, 2015). It is via such an international state system, which grants rights to some while it denies the same rights to others, combined with a global capitalist regime that continues to privilege the North that creates both the necessary conditions and the solution capital desires to transfigure such transnational indentureship via an immobilized mobility.

The immobilization that Jamaican workers experience in the Okanagan was made all too apparent on numerous occasions during my fieldwork. Shortly after one of our first conversations, Jacob had a particularly harrowing confrontation with his employer that underscored the disciplinary power of confinement in workers’ daily lives. One afternoon, Jacob had joined a group of migrants and local residents for a friendly soccer game at a local elementary school. As an organizer with RAMA, I was part of this group. On his way home, his coworkers called to let him know their boss was angry that he had attended this event. Fearing he would get in trouble, Jacob called me on his cell and then lowered his phone to his side to hide the fact that he was still on the line with me as he walked back onto the farm property. I

listened as his employer yelled and swore at him repeatedly, telling him he would be on a plane back to Jamaica the next day. Once his boss had left, Jacob cried with me on the phone as we discussed how to proceed. With his girlfriend expecting their first child at home in Jamaica, Jacob could not afford to lose his job or position in the SAWP.

In the end, Jacob was not sent home as threatened. However, he was illegally suspended for two days of work as punishment. The following morning, when the rest of his coworkers and housemates went to work in the orchard, Jacob was instructed to stay behind. A few days later, Jacob and I had a chance to talk about what had occurred that night. I asked him if he would like to change employers and he responded that, yes, he would prefer to work on another farm, but that he did not feel like transferring to another farm was a viable option. I asked him about the difficulties of obtaining a transfer, and he responded:

“[Exhales] Oh, it’s very bad. Because, I mean, they’re taking us here to work on a strict permit where you’re allowed only to work for one person until his crop is over. If his crop isn’t over, then you cannot move to a next job, which I think is very unfair, because if he’s not treating you good, they’re gonna tell you that you have to work out the season or they will send you home and replace with you someone else. These are like—unfair things. So whatever bad things the boss is giving you or bad way he is treating you, you’re gonna have to work with it.” (Interview by author, 2014)

With regard to his temporary contract and inability to remain legally in Canada at the end of his work term, Jacob scoffed and continued. “I thought about this like a thousand times. It’s like... well, like I said, it’s like modern day slavery. They don’t care—once they harvest their crops,

make their money, that's it. They're done. You go home. They don't want to hear from you or see you again until the next harvesting season." Workers' keen sense of their own disposability, the weak social ties between them and their employers, and the abuse they felt they endured under the SAWP formed a consistent undercurrent during our many conversations.

As briefly mentioned in chapter two, understanding that SAWP farmworkers constitute indentured or unfree labourers also flips the popular narrative surrounding choice that is so often used to counter concerns pertaining to the indignity of migrants' workplace and living conditions. As Georgia, a Jamaican migrant woman, explained to me:

"It's not really a choice. But because you need—you have your family. And you need better for your family. So you put all this strength, come, work, to help them back home. That is the main thing. Helping your family. What I went through in life, I don't want my kids to go through it. I want them to get a better education, that they can be a better man for tomorrow. So that is why I am here. Not because I want to, but I came because I need a better life for my family. I need a roof over my head. You understand? I need a better well-being. So that is why I am here. But if it wasn't for that, I would not come. No. I would not. The key word is 'survival' for us." (Interview by author, 2014)

Necessity and survival motivate migrant farmworkers' migration and their endurance of the unfreedom they experience working in Canada under the SAWP. In her revealing thesis on the resistance of Mexican SAWP workers in British Columbia, Paz Ramirez (2013) writes that "Not unlike a battered woman who feels trapped in an abusive relationship and cannot find a way to get out of her situation because she does not have the economic means to sustain herself and

her children; workers feel trapped in abusive and exploitative relationships, which nevertheless represent a way to secure a livelihood for their loved ones” (p. 75).

4.3. Total(izing) institutions and the SAWP farm site

My characterization of the SAWP farm site as a postmodern plantation is anchored to the critical definitions articulated by various scholars, as part of what McKittrick (2006) refers to as black “geographies of domination” (p. xix). Thompson (2012) defines the plantation as a “large, landed estate” that involves “diverse racial or cultural groups” and relies upon “the subordination of resident labourers to a planter for the purpose of producing an agricultural staple which is sold in a world market” (2012, p. 3). He contends that the plantation is a social and political institution with an industrial purpose, a product of both conquest and settlement, and that “it introduces, or evolves, and enforces order where there has been disorder and uncertainty among individuals who have been torn out of former group relations and left disorganized and unattached” (Thompson, 2012, p. 1-2). Tellingly, Thompson (2012) also notes that the contracting of imported or foreign labour is typical on plantations where harsh weather conditions are perceived as requiring the use of an already “acclimatized race” (p. 7).

In ways both profound and troubling, the living and working conditions produced on the Okanagan SAWP farms where this study’s informants were employed conform to Erving Goffman’s (1961) classic articulation of a total institution. Goffman notes that while “every institution has encompassing tendencies” (p. 1), total institutions decry contemporary social organization by cutting against our tendency “to sleep, play and work in different places, in each case with a different set of coparticipants, under a different authority, and without an overall rational plan” (p. 2). In this way, a total institution shows no respect for “the kinds of barriers ordinarily separating these three spheres of life” (p. 2). In other words, what differentiates a total

institution from any other is that the authority of the workplace does not end with payment for a day's work. By contrast, in a total institution, an inmate's entire day is laid out for them. Their 'time off' is not their own. They cannot organize their own leisure time. Even these aspects of their lives, which are generally left to the discretion of the individual, become the responsibility of the institution. In this way, Goffman argues that the total institution is "incompatible with the basic work-payment structure of our society" (p. 3).

Coming full circle, Goffman's total institution, which is designed to exert maximum control over inmates, bears striking resemblance to the slave plantation prior to emancipation. In their novel sociological study, Knottnerus, Monk, and Jones (1999) make use of Goffman's (1961) work to examine social relations on the slave plantation in United States's deep south. Although they identify several variances, the authors note that the total institution's organizing scope, or the degree to which it is closed off to the outside world, is key to the social organization of many plantations. Though plantations frequently lacked barriers or walls sufficient to physically prevent slaves from leaving the property, they were often geographically isolated due to their rural locations. In addition, plantations made use of formalized rules that restricted slaves from coming and going from the plantation property as they pleased. Taken together with the typically erratic and all-consuming working hours that agricultural production demands, the segregation and separation of the plantation from the rest of society function in much the same way as in a total institution. The high degree of formalized social distance between slaves and plantation owners, rigid plantation hierarchy, and intense surveillance of slave activities are also typical of a total institution, all of which are evidenced on SAWP farm sites.

4.3.1. Farm life as prison life

In my interviews, study participants drew similar comparisons between life on the farm, the plantation, and in prison. In fact, the vast majority of workers with whom I have formed meaningful and trusting relationships over the past three years, either through my research or role as a community organizer, have at one time or another compared their experience in Canada to prison life. Central to these characterizations were the extra-legal restrictions to which Jamaican migrant farmworkers are subject during their work term—restrictions which touched nearly every aspect of their lives in Canada. These “rules” governed their ability to leave the farm, receive visitors, engage in leisure activities such as team sports, form relationships (whether as acquaintances, friends, or intimate partners), attend church or other events, interact with community organizations and advocates, visit family they may have in Canada, and even return home. According to study participants, employers and liaison officials had very specific expectations with regard to farmworker behaviour that included but also extended far beyond their performance during paid working hours.

For instance, in my first conversation over a community meal with a group of Jamaican farmworkers and local residents, Georgia described her experience on an Okanagan farm in the SAWP as “prison life”. Several weeks later, I asked what this meant for her. She explained:

“Prison life is like a bootcamp. Going to a bootcamp. You know, you have to get up, do your chores, do what you have to do, you can’t move from where you are, you have to stay where you are, you have somebody over you to say “Do this, do that”. You get no time for yourself. That is prison life for me.”

Central to Georgia's conception of "prison life" on an Okanagan farm was the degree of control exercised by an external authority over her daily life, especially her time and mobility. While in Canada, she lived with restrictions on her affiliations and social networks, her exposure to the community at large, and her comings and goings from the farm. In a conversation with Lamont, a Jamaican farmworker with six years in Canada and three in the Okanagan, he described his life in Canada.

"The day my boss tell me say we can't have visitor, it's worser than prison! Prison is a thing like this now—you can get visitors in prison at certain times. And if you working for a boss then, and you can't get a visitor, it's worser than prison. For nothing should go like that. If you should have the time, you can go have a coffee with a friend and sit and talk. For your work is over, you know? For the day now. That means that the balance of the time is your time." (Interview by author, 2014)

In another conversation, Lamont explained:

"Alright, alright, listen to me now. Work time is off like five, six o'clock. And if the boss come at eight o'clock in the night for we to help him to do something, and if he's an hour, even a half hour, we get no pay for that. It's just a "help". And we always—we *always* be there to help him. When him come, we could go and lie down and not help him for working time is over. But we don't—we don't come [to Canada] for that. For him come, and him need something to do. We just do it with him." (Interview by author, 2014)

The troubling element of workers' performance of unpaid labour for their employers to whom they feel indebted is that they do so out of obligation. While Canadians donate volunteer hours during off-hours of their own accord, it is Jamaican workers' *unfreedom* in Canada that requires that they regularly perform unpaid labour for their employers. While the delivery of unpaid or "free" labour is not unusual, especially in a world of after-office emailing between global offices and 24-hour availability, migrant farmworkers' segregation from local communities, isolation on farm sites where they both live and work, and the surveillance and curfews to which they are so often subject make them particularly vulnerable to employers' demands on their labour at all hours of the day or night.

The types of additional tasks that Jamaican migrant farmworkers are asked to perform are also demonstrative of both their weakened bargaining power and their racialized status. One study participant recalled being asked to 'help' her boss clean the dog pen with a shovel on her day off. Although she knew that she would not be paid for this work and that it fell outside of her job description as a farmworker, she felt obligated to say yes because "if you say no and you are not available, they will send you home" (interview by author, 2014). In another instance, she explained that her employers had asked her to clean the floor of a new rental property they were preparing to show (an activity clearly outside of her job description which blatantly violates her work contract). Instead of providing her with a mop, she was given a towel and told to wash the floor on her hands and knees. Indignant, she told me that she would never clean the floor this way in Jamaica, "But here, they expect me to get down and clean the floor on my hands and knees" (interview by author, 2014).

Commenting on the overall treatment of farmworkers in Canada, Lamont insisted:

“We should have better treatment for doing this work, for the Canadians don’t really do this. No. Not enough Canadians get up at five o’clock in the morning, pick up your apple sack and put it on them stomach and gone for the day and coming’ back at five o’clock in the evening, just to pick your crop, or make your farm go good. They always say we Jamaican are, and the Mexicans the same way, coming here to work—well, the workers here they should treat *good*. And treatment in the best type of way for we come here to work on the work visa, and the country need workers. So if you don’t handle your workers good, it’s like you’re [not] doing the country good.” (Interview by author, 2014)

As mentioned in chapter three, the threat of deportation or “deportability” (Peutz & De Genova, 2010) shapes migrant workers’ behaviour and their relationships in Canada both on- and off-farm, making deportability a highly pervasive as a technology of disciplinary power that is dispersed throughout the anatomy of the SAWP. This is largely accomplished through legal apertures within the SAWP, which is structured to amplify farmers’ and state control over migrant bodies by facilitating arbitrary deportations entirely at the discretion of employers. Within the first two weeks of their arrival in Canada, a worker’s contract can be terminated and they may be deported without cause. Although the ‘probation period’ formally ends after two weeks, migrant workers can still be deported with cause, which is left to the employer to define (Preibisch, 2005). Deportability then, or the possibility of deportation, as a regime of disciplinary power, has the two-fold effect of both discouraging deviant behaviour and producing worker compliance. Migrant farmworkers’ fear of early repatriation by their employers functions much like panoptic power, in that regardless of how many migrants are actually deported, it is the ever-present potential for deportation acts as a key technology of discipline, serving as a mechanism of behavioural modification which also reduces workers’ political proclivity.

Jamaican migrant farmworkers' personal relationships—not only romantic, but also platonic and collegial—are subject to regulation and surveillance. The sexual regulation of workers' bodies and the surveillance of with whom they interact and how represents another form of criminalization of black workers in Canada (interview by author with Chris Ramsaroop, 2015). According to Ramsaroop, in many cases, black migrant workers who engaged in relationships with white women were either sent home or were not called back the following year. In other cases, it is not only the regulation of workers' relationships but the absence of relationship between black workers and local white women that illustrates the chasm between black workers and the majority white communities in which they live and work. Jamaican workers frequently mimicked the way that local white folks looked at them in the street, giving me the most artificial smile they could muster. Their physical reenactment of their treatment by local residents ultimately reaffirms McKittrick's (2006) contention that Canada's historical interest in defining itself as Euro-white has defined black geographies as somehow "surprising" or out of place, and the encounter of a black person as an "unexpected or astonishing event" (p. 91).

Community organizers frequently navigate this surveillance alongside migrant farmworkers in their advocacy work and at time, it created challenges for this study. In an interview with a local community advocate, I learned that the Jamaican liaison had been keeping an eye on his social media pages and watching for posts featuring Jamaican SAWP workers (interview by author, 2015). Another afternoon in the early stages of this project, I was driving a group of Jamaican farmworkers back to their farm after a visit at a nearby coffee shop to introduce them to RAMA's work. As we approached their dormitories, a truck pulled out of the driveway and began driving towards us. Seated in the backseat of my car, the workers quickly ducked out of sight and shouted, "Drive! Drive!" Instead of turning into their driveway to take them home, I drove passed their farm. The workers laughed nervously in the back of my car, explaining that this truck

belonged to their boss and they would surely be in trouble if they were seen with me (despite the fact that their boss would have no way of knowing who I was or the purpose of our meeting). This particular farm had also installed cameras in and around the worksite.

While curfews were not being enforced at all of the farms I visited during my field work, the vast majority of the Jamaican workers with whom I interacted had experienced living and working on a farm with a curfew. While visiting the dormitories of one group of Jamaican workers I knew from the previous year in my capacity as an organizer with RAMA, I came across the below notice taped to the wall of the living room. Upon reading the first point, “No member of the opposite sex is allowed on the farm except in cases where permission is given by the employer”, I turned to the Jamaican men in the room and asked if I should leave. They responded with a shrug and a smile and told me not to worry about it—their season was over and the boss was not around. But despite the nonchalance with which this particular group of workers reacted to me, rules regulating black migrants’ relationships and personal space, with whom, when, and where they can interact with women or other members of the (predominantly white) local community, aside from being a violation of their human rights and an infringement upon their personal freedom, have the potential to carry very real consequences for their future employment in Canada.

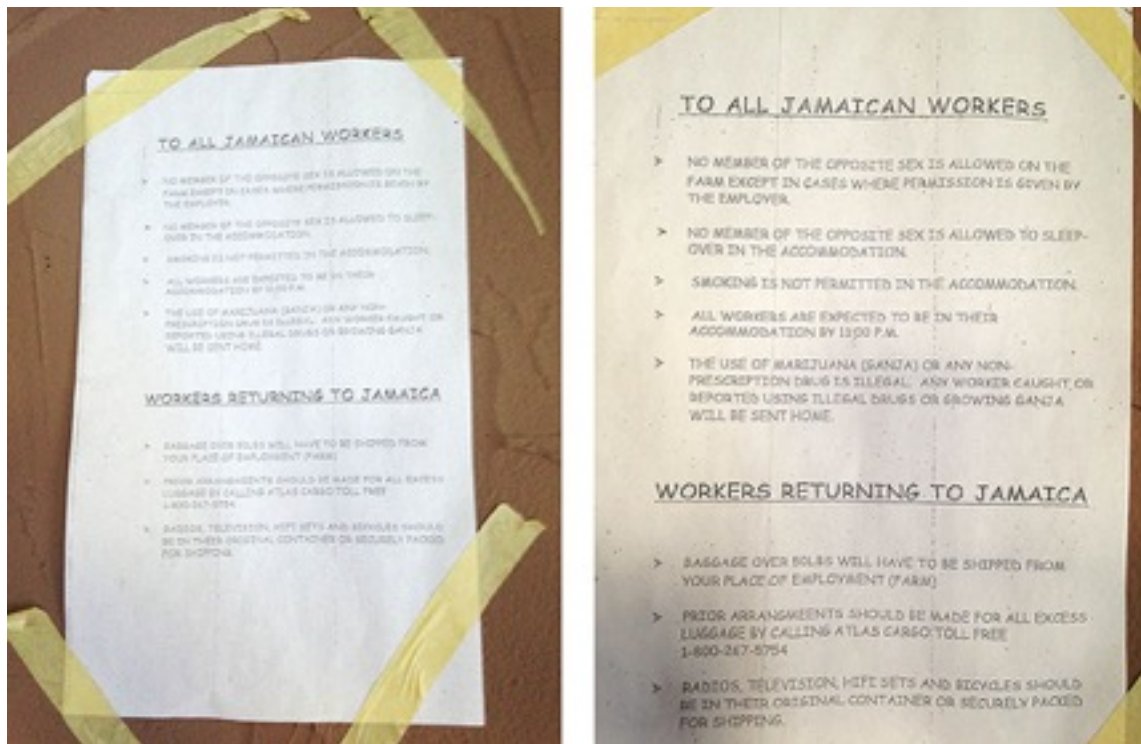


ILLUSTRATION 5. RULES FOR JAMAICAN FARMWORKERS POSTED ON THE WALL OF FARM DORMITORY IN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY

In one conversation with Lamont, I asked him how often they had visitors on his farm and he explained that occasionally a Jamaican from another farm would stop by, but they never had Canadian visitors. Echoing my earlier experience with a worker in the South Okanagan, Lamont remarked that I was the only woman that ever visited them on-farm where they were living. I reacted with astonishment, and he clarified:

“Just you. Yeah, for real! That is not a joke. It’s only you that comes there with we to have a visit. ... And when you gone, everyone to them bed. Who here, there, there, everyone gone to bed. For no more visiting. So I mean, [it would be nice to] go drink a beer sometime, maybe go down like to them wings place, like

sometimes, Saturday night time, maybe go down to the wings place where they play reggae night. Sometime.” (Interview by author, 2014)

Workers frequently discussed their frustration that they were neither able to extend hospitality to people they met in the community by inviting them into their “homes” in Canada, nor go out and socialize in the community. In a particular instance in 2014, Georgia told me about a time that they were invited out for dinner with a local Jamaican man they had met, and how this aggravated their employer. She continued:

“He invite us to church. Our boss doesn’t want us to go. She doesn’t want him to come there. And I’m like, “He is one of us! He is from the same country we are from! So should we pass him like we don’t know him?” No, I can’t do that. That is not me. So I was upset over that.”

The cameras installed on the farm where both Georgia and Tinesha were employed, while also used to protect the integrity of farm property, equipment, and other valuables, arguably constitute an apparatus of surveillance used to monitor workers’ activities both on and off the job in addition to their coming and going from farm premises. Visitors that the workers themselves received during off-hours were also monitored by camera. Georgia and Tinesha both described to me how “uncomfortable” (interviews by author, 2014) they felt under the watchful gaze of the camera. Georgia explains:

“The camera sees everything. If a vehicle comes, they know. Because they say to somebody and we hear back. So if a vehicle come in, they at home, where they are, [and they] call one of the workers and say, “What is that

vehicle doing on the compound?” If he comes on the property, they are going to call the police.”

Perhaps more noteworthy than the phone call from the employer to a worker to communicate that they know that they someone has arrived on the farm who is not an employee is the explicit threat to involve law enforcement should this man return. The intensity with which workers on this particular farm were surveilled by their employers was accentuated on numerous occasions over two seasons when I visited the farm myself as an organizer with RAMA to meet with both the Jamaican and Mexican men and women employed there. While on some occasions I was invited to park on the farm property, on others I was advised to park on the street, well out of the line of sight of the cameras in order to avoid alerting the suspicion of the farm owners and their employers. Perhaps absurdly, but as yet another testament to the translocal reach of the mechanisms of control facilitated by the SAWP, the employers on this particular farm lived in another community an hour and a half drive by car. Their surveillance of the workers in their employ thus required the use of advanced technology to condense the time and space that may otherwise have afforded these workers some semblance of privacy.

On-farm rules were often applied selectively to one group of workers but not to another. Georgia and Tinesha recalled in frustration the differences between the way their employers treated them and their Mexican coworkers on a farm in the Central Okanagan. According to my discussions with them, although the Mexican migrants employed on their farm had gender-segregated dormitories, they were permitted to cook and eat together in the same kitchen or watch movies together in the evening. In contrast, the Jamaican men and women on their farm were not allowed to associate with one another during their off time or to enter each others' dormitories. The women contended that rules that restricted them, as grown adults, from

socializing with their fellow “countrymen”, were neither right nor dignified. Notably, the degree of tension that existed between different racialized groups of migrant farmworkers employed at the same farm varied significantly, with workers on some farms conducting informal language exchanges and socializing together, while at other farms the communities that formed were clearly divided along ethnic lines and fuelled by workers’ frustration related to differential treatment in the workplace.

4.3.3. Mortification and dehumanizing treatment

In a vicious cycle, practices which dehumanize Jamaican migrant workers both in their own eyes and the eyes of SAWP authorities render further dehumanizing treatment excusable, or even permissible. The process of stripping away migrants’ entitlements to basic rights such as dignity and privacy begins with the medical exam that Jamaicans who wish to participate in the SAWP are required to undergo in Jamaica when they apply to work in Canada. Over my several years of advocating for migrant farmworkers, the indignity of the medical exam has been recounted to me numerous times by workers from various farms. Jamaican workers have explained the importance of embodying health, strength, and agility to the examining doctors so that they can be sure to receive a favourable medical review, an integral element to the SAWP approval process for workers. Some have told me how they intentionally refrain from washing their hands, or even put dirt under their finger nails to accentuate their appearance as a typical “farmworker”, suitable for work on a Canadian orchard. It was to my surprise that another element of the medical exam surfaced in a conversation that I had with Roy about what he would like to see changed in the SAWP, who explained his frustration with the situation leading up to the exam:

Roy: When we are doing our medical—it would be a shame for you guys to be there. The first night of the medical they have three hundred guys.

Author: People are sleeping in the street, yeah?

Roy: No, not on the street. No, no, we have beds there, lots of beds. Sleeping is not the problem—that's not the problem. But you're gonna see a doctor in the morning! And there's no fucking water.

Author: No water?

Roy: No water in the building to have a shower. And you're gonna be taking off your clothes for the doctor to check you. For your medical exam. The medicals are two days. Yeah, you have to do your medical. You have to do your blood, your urine. The next day you will see the doctor for your exam. Your clothes have to be off. And there's no water there for you to have a shower. Come on, man. We are paying for that service. They drawing our money. Cold cash. We need water. We seeing a doctor.

For Roy, having to take off his clothes in the presence of a doctor for a physical examination without being able to bathe himself beforehand was an indignity and embarrassment. While there may not be anything far out of the ordinary about removing your clothes for a medical exam, Roy's account of the situation and his ensuing discomfort call attention to the mortifying element of this process. As Goffman (1961) points out, stripping is "routine" in total institution environments, where "a series of abasements, degradations, humiliations, and profanations of the self" (p. 4) contribute to individual mortification and the peeling back of those aspects of

personhood that make the individual who they know themselves to be. Aside from the physical stripping for the medical exam, Jamaicans must also pay to undergo biometric screening before ultimately leaving behind family, friends, community, and business when they depart for Canada.

In another conversation with Roy, he explained that he thought his employer's expectations of him were unrealistic, particularly with regard to how quickly he was expected to pick.

"We are not machines. You can put gas in the crane and make it run but it is a machine. I am a human. You cannot take out my heart, take out my liver when they give out. I am not a machine."

4.3. Anti-black racism and microaggressions in the Okanagan Valley

As both Wong (1988) and Joy (1982) demonstrate in their studies of ethnic relations in the Okanagan, racialized farm labourers have long been made peripheral and excluded from social and community life in the valley. Likewise, in their analysis of local newspaper articles, Aguiar, McKinnon and Dixon (2010/2011) show that to be Jamaican in the Okanagan Valley is to be "a marked and suspect body "threatening" or "menacing" the local white population" (p. 65). For Jamaican farmworkers then, the social exclusion they experience is amplified by everyday anti-black racism both on and off farm. Anti-black racism is predicated upon a fear and mistrust of the black body and especially the black man (interview by author with Chris Ramsaroop, 2015), constructions of black criminality and masculinity, the infantilization of black behaviour, and presumptions about the "place" of blackness in a capitalist system and the (reduced) value of black labour (Allahar, 2011). Many Jamaican workers felt they were the target of subtle micro-aggressions, while in other cases the racism they experienced involved explicit or violent verbal or physical abuse. Some workers reported that name-calling and other dehumanizing tropes

descended from the slavery era were sometimes used to push them on the job. Racial profiling, segregation, dismissal, and demeaning treatment in public spaces were also an everyday occurrence for many Jamaican workers that I spoke with. In communities across the valley, Jamaican workers from various farms reported being corralled into line-ups at banks that were segregated from local residents. In these instances, workers would arrive by bus in large groups and be directed to stand to one side of the regular line up, presumably so that local residents did not have to wait behind such a large group. As one Jamaican worker recalled, the bank teller explained that keeping them in a separate line would allow the bank to “serve us Jamaicans better and faster” (interview by author, 2014). The second time that this occurred, the worker complained loudly and he and his Jamaican coworkers were quickly integrated into the primary line up with local residents.

The microaggressions experienced by workers as they navigated Okanagan communities to do weekly errands or purchase gifts to bring home were often where it was made the most clear that in Canada, to be black is to be a racial Other. The Jamaican workers that participated in this project frequently referenced local (white) residents’ shock that Jamaican workers were working in Canada during the fall and winter, as though they were biologically unequipped to withstand the colder months (field notes, 2014). Many Jamaican farmworkers reported having trouble returning purchases at local stores in communities across the valley when the items were faulty. In one instance, a Jamaican farmworker explained that it was on his third attempt to return a faulty item to a local pawn shop that he brought a white friend and the store finally agreed to make the exchange. In some cases, seemingly minute expressions of discomfort by local residents culminated in explicit microaggressions that were distressing for workers. Multiple Jamaican farmworkers, both men and women, explained to me how local residents often gave them too much space on the sidewalk—in the eyes of the workers, more space than was

necessary. Likewise, Jamaican workers in the Kelowna area talked of splitting into smaller groups when they were walking around downtown Kelowna at night in order to avoid being stopped and questioned by the police. Entering a local nightclub together in 2014, I observed the doorman request identification from each of my Jamaican friends. This was the first time I had ever seen the doorman request identification to enter this particular club. When I complained, I was told that this was standard procedure.

At a national level, recent years have seen Caribbean migrant farmworkers at the center of a number of high profile cases of racial profiling in Canada. Culminating in allegations the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) found “troubling” (OHRC, 2014), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) was accused by J4MW of racially profiling black migrant farmworkers from the Caribbean in its request for DNA samples following a sexual assault in the same area in 2013 (Keung, 2013). The complaint contended that, while searching for the perpetrator, a local OPP detachment had gone from farm to farm collecting DNA samples from black migrant farmworkers, regardless of whether the workers in question matched any of the suspect’s physical descriptors beyond skin colour. Although the victim had described the suspect as well-built, in his mid-to-late twenties with a height of 5’11 and no facial hair, J4MW contended that workers as old as 61 and weighing as much as 141 kilograms were asked to submit to sampling. The voluntary nature of the DNA tests notwithstanding, migrant workers reported that they felt as though to decline the test could jeopardize their employment in Canada (CTV News, 2013; Brennan, 2013). In early December, a 35-year old Trinidadian man was arrested and charged for the crime and the OPP has since publicly renounced the use of racial profiling. Of course, whether or not black people, or those from any particular social or racial group, in fact engage in criminal activity is not at issue. As Gilroy (1991) remarks in his investigation of historical representations of black criminality in Britain, “It is no betrayal of black interests to say

that blacks commit crime... the possibility of a direct relationship between ethnicity, black culture and crime is an altogether different and more complex issue” (p. 75).

4.4. The practice of everyday resistance

It goes without saying that such experiences of racial profiling and segregation are painful for migrant farmworkers. To make matters worse, reacting to racism or other forms of discrimination —especially on the job—is to risk their employment. However, in spite of the mechanisms used by the Canadian state, foreign liaison officers, and employers to render protest difficult, migrant farmworkers exercise various forms of resistance on a daily basis. Because of the consequences that outright political action or overt defiance could engender, resistance is often (but not always) subtle. Though sometimes pre-conceived, it is often spontaneous, informal, and necessarily intended to avoid detection and identification as resistance (Scott, 1985). It includes such commonplace acts as lying, foot-dragging and collective work pacing, working “under the table”, secretly documenting their own housing conditions and abuses of their labour rights, and hiding injuries and pregnancies and seeking clandestine treatment.

Covert forms of everyday resistance are carried out just beneath the surface and frequently accompanied by overt deference to authorities. Indeed, in cases both on and off farm, workers have performed subordination (McLaughlin, 2010). During the recruitment process in their home countries, Jamaican workers are careful to respond to interview questions in ways that demonstrate their adaptability, obedience, and physical aptitude for farm labour (McLaughlin, 2010). Workers report sitting in the reception of government offices, poised on the balls of their feet so that they can quickly jump when their name is called in order to demonstrate their agility and fitness and, by extension, their suitability for farm work in Canada (interview by author with numerous farmworkers). Workers also do what they can to physically embody the ideal

farmworker, including intentionally not washing their hands before their interview or putting dirt under their fingernails to boost the “farmworker” appearance (interview by author). As mentioned earlier, many of the Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed under the SAWP, especially younger men, have completed some level of post-secondary education. Some are skilled tradesmen with their own businesses in Jamaica. In the past three years, I have known tile-layers, barbers, chefs, drivers, mechanics, professional musicians, and experienced cleaners, in addition to men who own and operate their own farms or other businesses in Jamaica. For some workers, the process of embodying the meek, blue-coloured worker the SAWP apparently targets involved drastically “reducing” or simplifying their skills, employment history, and life experience in order to meet the narrow and limited program participation requirements. In these instances, lying about their education or experience to secure a coveted position in the SAWP is one way that workers’ circumvent the program’s “low-skilled” designation and the state’s draconian and exclusive immigration policies.

In other instances, especially where workers identify the opportunity to stand together with their coworkers, migrants opt for direct action such as work stoppages or informal strikes. In one powerful example, Jamaican migrant farmworkers across the Okanagan Valley frequently report that their pay cheques are delivered late. The tardy receipt of a pay cheque is a source of anxiety for workers supporting their families, especially for those with young children. During my first conversation with Roy, I recall that when we began to discuss his pay, he threw his arms up in the air. “If you forget to put gas in your car, it don’t run. Well, if you forget to pay me, I don’t work,” he exclaimed. The following year, when their pay cheques at the same farm were late once again, he and his coworkers initiated a wildcat strike. Roy explained:

“We refused to work. No pay, no work. I said, ‘Hey, your family up there has something to eat, right? Well, this is the day my family back home are looking forward for something to eat.’ I’m not there. I’m here, working for them. That’s why I’m here. For this day. That’s what my first supervisor [in Canada] said to me. Whenever it’s pay day, fuck. ‘Hey, guys!’ He said. ‘This is what you’re here for!’ Handing us our cheque, he said, ‘Hey, no pay. No belly. Can’t work.’ Yes, our supervisor in Grand Forks tell me that.” (Interview by author, 2014)

Although it is less common, workers also “go alone”, confronting employers and liaison officers directly on their own. Jacob recounted an altercation he had with his employer in the Fraser Valley:

“I remember he called me a nigger and I said, “Go fuck yourself.” Excuse my language. And he got like, so upset at me. [He said,] “You’re not coming back next year!” I said, “Oh, sure. Go and report it. I don’t care. I’m not your kid, I’m not a slave. So you can do whatever you want. He got really upset at me and I just didn’t care.” (Interview by author, 2014)

In summary, despite the immense power that employers exercise over farmworkers’ everyday lives, workers nonetheless find creative and nuanced ways to collaborate in solidarity, exercise their agency, and defy traditional authority in defence of their dignity and rights. In our many conversations over nearly four years, Lamont frequently emphasized the importance of workers continuing to stand up for each other in pursuit of improved working and living conditions:

“Never you lie about your treatment. For that won’t get you nowhere. If you lie about your treatment, you cause the treatment to be [worse] for no one will know that they are treating you bad if you tellin’ a lie like you be getting good treatment when you be getting bad treatment. You have to talk, [say] what you need and what you feel.” (Interview by author, 2014)

Like all spaces, the social relations of power on the SAWP farm site are in constant renegotiation and reproduction. Moreover, as workers frequently pointed out, SAWP farms vary from one to another. As such, Jamaican farmworkers are subject to differing intensities of exploitation, surveillance, and disciplinary power depending on a farm’s history, workers’ relationships to their consular official and supervisor, and their employer’s personal goodwill. This thesis is a testament to the contradictions and complexities of these social relations and the particular forms they take, but also a testament to their harrowing consistencies. As this section has demonstrated, for Jamaican migrant farmworkers employed in the Okanagan Valley, the SAWP farm site constitutes a totalizing institution. Migrant farmworkers’ segregation from the communities where they live in Canada, the strict surveillance of their behaviour, relationships, and movements, and in some cases their near total confinement to the farm premises where they are live and work, contribute to a segregated, totalizing environment that is dehumanizing at the same time that it creates the conditions for the extraction of their maximum labour power.

In this context, some of the most powerful acts of resistance, those with the ability to contribute to lasting cultural change, are seemingly innocuous. Activities such as playing soccer, going dancing, attending an English class, sharing a meal with local residents, or maintaining romantic relationships serve to reduce workers’ segregation, isolation, and vulnerability, in addition to

equipping workers to better communicate with their employers and assert their rights. Such actions constitute an attack at the core of a program that is designed to maintain Jamaican farmworkers' subjugation, domination, and disciplinability in Canada by incorporating them into the social fabric of diverse communities that recognize and honour their full humanity.

Chapter 5. Cultivating justice for migrant farmworkers

“So who’s dancing?”

Their gaze shifted from me, standing over the table with a pint in hand, to each other.

“Come on,” I teased. “Who’s going to dance tonight?”

After another brief pause, one of the guys pointed across the narrow table to his coworker. His gesture broke the silence, and the whole group erupted in nervous but uninhibited laughter. Everyone started speaking at once. For a moment, the sound of their exchange drowned out the music. I put my hands up in mock defence. I was going to dance whether they joined me or not, I joked, and they nodded emphatically that of course, they were going to dance too. The conversation turned to clubbing in Jamaica, the music, beat, and girls. Twenty minutes later, four of us broke from the group, a blend of RAMA organizers and Jamaican farmworkers, still seated, and headed for the bar’s modest dance floor. We found it empty and spread ourselves out over its four unseen quadrants, settling into the shallow beat of the DJ’s intro set.



ILLUSTRATION 6. DANCING WITH JAMAICAN FARMWORKERS

5.1. Harvesting freedom for farmworkers

2016 marks fifty years since the creation of the SAWP. Perhaps coincidentally, it also marks fifty years since my mother's family came to the Okanagan Valley to work for a season at Covert Farms. Over these decades, Canada has grown increasingly dependent on permanent access to temporary foreign workers (Hanley & Shragge, 2010; Siemiatycki, 2010). In the agricultural sector, where unpredictable harvests present employment challenges for many producers, migrant labour constitutes a transnational reserve army of labour, a flexible, "just in time" workforce that takes up the dirty, difficult, and dangerous jobs now rejected by most Canadians (Aguilar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2011; McLaughlin, 2009; Trumper & Wong, 2010). In British Columbia, the SAWP has served as a lifeline for many agricultural producers and is credited with saving the industry (Tomic, Trumper, & Aguilar, 2006). Meanwhile, the SAWP's measurable economic benefits for migrant farmworkers, their families, and home economies as well as for

Canadian employers and the agricultural sector at large have permitted Canadians to divert attention from its many troubling drawbacks, not to mention its problematic structure. As I have argued elsewhere (Hahn, 2014), the SAWP's continued expansion coupled with its constant exemption from changes to the federal TFWP such as those legislated in 2014, are evidence of the program's perceived "success". Problematically, in the eyes of many policymakers, the SAWP seems to be working as designed. Yet attention to the voices of migrant farmworkers and the community organizers that work alongside them reveals a very different reality.

The Okanagan Valley has been shaped by the intersecting politics of race, food, and borders, in addition to the modern demands of a globalizing agricultural economy. Romantic representations of the Okanagan Valley's agricultural heritage and the fruitful trajectory of its rapidly neoliberalizing export model obscure a dark reality. The truth, according to those climbing the ladders, backs bent over rows of root vegetables, fingers dyed purple from grape juice, is neither so simple nor so virtuous. Much is erased in the representations and exaltation of the farm site and its social relations that stands in the way of realizing justice for those who work the fields and cultivate the fresh fruit and vegetables that Okanagan residents, proud "locavores", count on each summer. *HelloBC.com* notes that "foodies flock to the area's renowned orchards and vineyards" and that "the history and culture of the region – from its Aboriginal peoples to European food traders to wine makers and food producers – is strongly tied to the land". Still, little scholarly research has been conducted on agriculture in the Okanagan Valley (Aguiar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2011), and even less which pays heed to labour relations and their intersection with local, historical paradigms of white supremacy. As this study shows, the hospitality extended to tourists and other temporary or would-be longtime residents of the Okanagan, overflowing as it is with promises of rest, relaxation, and play, contrast starkly with the hostility experienced by racialized non-citizen workers under Canada's TFWP, and

particularly Jamaican farmworkers under the SAWP.

Studies that discount the role of structural racism by remaining silent with regard to race risk reproducing dominant conceptions of Canadian exceptionalism, whereby the Canadian state is elevated for its supposedly outstretched arms and northern hospitality, especially in contrast to its apparently inhospitable, anti-immigrant neighbour to the south. Yet curiously, many studies which acknowledge the centrality of unfreedom or restricted mobility to the appeal of employing “foreign” migrant farmworkers often make no linkage between the subjugation of migrant workers and the structural racism that facilitates their exclusion from certain rights and freedoms otherwise afforded to Canadian citizens (see Basok, 2007; Hennebry & Preibisch, 2010; Preibisch & Otero, 2014; Russo, 2011). As this thesis has shown, race remains central to processes of state formation and, by extension, questions of immigration and belonging in Canada. So long as this is the case, race must figure principally in our research and our activism as we endeavour to cultivate freedom for farmworkers and justice for migrants everywhere.

And so to mark the SAWP’s anniversary and fifty years of resistance by migrant farmworkers, J4MW launched its Harvesting Freedom Campaign on January 25 of this year (www.harvestingfreedom.org). The title of the campaign is not incidental. As this thesis has demonstrated, freedom of movement—across national borders, from one farm to another, between economic sectors as labourers, and within Canadian communities—is of paramount importance for migrant farmworkers. A far cry from calling for the program’s elimination, central to J4MW’s campaign instead is the demand for access to permanent residency status for migrant farmworkers across Canada. The group introduced its campaign with the hand-delivery of a giant anniversary party invitation to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, inviting him to “RSVP

and bring justice to the thousands of farmworkers who have put food on Canada's tables for fifty years without any chance to lay roots in the country" (www.harvestingfreedom.org). Indeed, as this thesis has argued and according to J4MW's campaign, "justice is 50 years overdue" (www.harvestingfreedom.org).



ILLUSTRATION 7. JAMAICAN MIGRANT FARMWORKER HOLDING A CALLALOO PLANT FROM HIS GARDEN IN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY

The Harvesting Freedom Campaign is itself deeply rooted in migrant farmworkers' own calls for access to permanent residency status in Canada. While not every migrant farmworker envisions a life for themselves and their family in Canada, in my years as a community organizer with RAMA and throughout this project, countless workers have expressed their desire to remain in Canada permanently. On numerous occasions, I have accompanied workers to legal workshops and appointments or fielded questions about how to immigrate to Canada. As Georgia lamented in one of our many conversations:

“Because if we have the right to come here and work, why can’t we stay? We supposed to have the right to stay. So I don’t know how they implement those contracts, but I think if we can come to your country and work, to better your country, why can’t we come and live in *your* country? It shouldn’t be a problem. So I think the government need to look into that more.” (Interview by author, 2014)

In Lamont’s words:

“It’s no freedom going to Canada. For that’s what I’m saying, we need to get up and open the way for our freedom. We are not free. Listen to me—I’m in Canada working, eight months. Go back in Jamaica, four months. Come back to Canada, eight months. Why I can’t have the freedom to stay in Canada and go back to Jamaica when I need [to] and come back to Canada, me with my family? That is the way of freedom you know. Yeah! Remember, if my family sick in Jamaica now, and I feel like I have the money so I can buy my ticket to go, and if tell my boss say, boss, I need to go, then I have to wait until *next* year again, when this program start over before me can come *maybe*. For maybe now, maybe they going to say, you breaching your contract. That means the boss going to look at me and say, Your family sick? And if you leave work and don’t go tend to your family? Well, I don’t believe that is right.” (Interview by author, 2014)

At the same time that it limits workers’ ability to return home when and as needed, the SAWP’s requirement that migrant farmworkers leave Canada by December 15 amplifies their already acute sense of their own exploitability, disposability, and temporality. In my first interview with

Jacob, he explained how for SAWP employers, he feels that Jamaican migrant farmworkers are viewed as coats. He later elaborated:

“Saying ‘We were like a coat’, is like, once he get his crop harvest[ed], then he has nothing more to do with us until the next harvesting season. So, you know, right there and then, he is sending you home. And then all you have to do is sit and pray that he calls you for the next harvesting season. So it’s like, wearing a coat in the winter, hanging it [laughs]—hanging it up in the summer, and looking for it again in the winter. That’s how I see this, which is not right. I think it would be better if we who are on the program—they should give us the chance whether we want to live here or not.” (Interview by author, 2014)

In its relegation of migrant workers to the status of “permanently temporary” (Hennebry, 2010), the SAWP is not exceptional, but consistent with other TFWPs which regulate the movement of racialized labourers across borders.

5.2. Nationalized borders and the twenty-first century colour line

In 1903, black sociologist and activist W. E. B. Du Bois (2009) astounded readers with his characterization of two worlds—a white world, and a secondary world “within the Veil” (p. 4). Writing of the social condition of Black people in the United States and ongoing social and political segregation following emancipation ultimately leads Du Bois to contend that “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line” (p. 11).

Little more than a century later, Du Bois’s “color-line” (2009, p. 11) is becoming increasingly evident in today’s “gated globe” (Cunningham, 2010). At first blush, the uninhibited movement of

transnational capital and the ease with which some bodies now circumnavigate the globe have fuelled perceptions of state borders as carrying little and less weight in a globalized world. However, as Sharma (2006) demonstrates (and every migrant knows), the nationalized border affects certain bodies differently. For a privileged few, the border constitutes an administrative annoyance. It is comprised of wait times and baggage restrictions, forced severity, and palpable discomfort under the penetrating gaze of humourless border agents. For Others, the border is intransigent, insurmountable, and inescapable. It is the dividing line between life and death, freedom and bondage, peace and war. The border splits families—spouses from one another, parents from children, mothers from infants still at the breast. It criminalizes human survival strategies carried out in desperation, hope, ingenuity, and courage. Ultimately, as Newman (2005) poignantly surmises, “the 21st century color line is the border”.

The border partitions and segregates not only space, but people and races. The border clings stubbornly like a shadow to one’s body, justifying panoptic surveillance, carceral governance, and the revocation of once inalienable rights and freedoms. In the words of Sharma (2006), “Contemporary border control practices, therefore, are products of and produce a global regime of apartheid in which at least two different legal systems operate within the space of any given national state - one that regulates national subjects and another that regulates foreign objects” (p. 7). Expanding upon this argument, Anderson, Sharma, and Wright (2009) contend that the border does not merely function to regulate entry and exit—first and foremost, it governs contingent inclusion by dictating the relationship between individual bodies and the state, capitalizing on a system of global apartheid to ostensibly include the negatively racialized so long as the state and its capitalist elite can harness and monetize their labour.

Paradoxically, borders are not so geographically fixed as we imagine. Rather, the border is fluid, flexible, and dynamic. The border comprises “processes, practices, discourses, symbols, institutions or networks through which power works” (Johnson et al, 2009, p.62). With this in mind, conceptions of the border as a singular, static line at the edge of the nation-state are no longer tenable (Johnson et al, 2011). Echoing Balibar (1998), Mountz (2004) writes, “The border is everywhere” (p. 342). Fanon writes, “The colonized world is a world divided in two. The dividing line, the border, is represented by the barracks and the police stations” (Fanon, 1963, p. 3). The border is a social problem that does not mediate social relations solely at the level of the interpersonal, nor is its power focused solely on the individual. The border exists to regulate *flows*—that is, its purview is not only the management of individual bodies, but the governance of group mobility as people traverse from one sovereign space to another. To echo Foucault (2004), its task is the management of a multiplicity of individuals in motion.

As such, the border’s tour de force does not end with a stamp in one’s passport or a foot on the dry land. Discursively, the border gives meaning to numerous analytical and legal categories, such as “immigrant”, “migrant”, “citizen”, and “alien”. The border reproduces the dividing line between ‘us’ and ‘them’ by physically delineating the sovereign space of the state and, by extension, who shall be included and who shall be excluded from the nation’s space, its citizenry, and the obligations and responsibilities that accompany political inclusion. In their special editorial on No Borders politics, Anderson, Sharma, and Wright (2009) underscore the ideological underpinnings of the nationalized border. Refuting mainstream ideas of the state border as natural or necessary, they argue that borders “are the mark of a particular type of relationship, one based on deep divisions and inequalities between people who are given varying national statuses” (p. 6). The authors suggest that even though borders primary task is “fixing, categorizing, and setting people in new relations of power” (p. 6) the border itself is not

static. Instead, the border is sewn to us like a shadow, accompanying us as we move through space and determining our social and political location once inside the nation-state. Importantly, the authors argue that border does not serve the purpose we so often believe it does—the border does not stop the movement of people, but instead *differentiates* between them once they are together inside the sovereign space of the nation-state. Given this context, it is far more complicated than the traditional binary of “national” versus “foreigner” would have us believe, as even the right to be a “true” national is reserved for certain national subjects that fit to the state’s narrow vision of an ideal citizen-subject.

In his infamous piece “The Clash of Civilizations?”, Huntington (1993) also identifies the colour line. Outlining his vision of the future of international relations, which he summarizes as “West versus the rest” (p. 39), Huntington writes, “The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future” (p. 22). He goes on to explicitly address the question, “What do we mean when we talk of a civilization? A civilization is a cultural entity. Villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, religious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity” (p. 23-4). In Huntington’s view, difference—particularly, cultural or “ethnic” deviations from Western norms and values—and those who embody its variations, are a threat. This supposedly cultural difference is static, “less mutable and hence less easily compromised” (p. 27) than different political or ideological leanings. Put bluntly, the question is not, according to Huntington, “Which side are you on?” but “Who are you?” (p. 27).

Such premonitions, founded upon increasingly visible “cultural” divisions and the declining hegemony of the “West”, should concern those of us preoccupied with racial segregation and the politics of the border in the twenty-first century. That Huntington’s article contains no explicit reference to “race” does little to hide its racist underpinnings. Like contemporary immigration

policy, which is no longer written in explicitly racial terms, ideologies that further entrench supposedly fixed, essentialized cultural differences and divisions are nonetheless racialized. As Foucault notes, race designates not a biological divide, but a historical, even political break (Foucault, 2003). In a neoliberal world, cultural and political differences scapegoat racism, but these differences are not so natural or fixed as Huntington suggests. Instead, as Balibar demonstrates, “It is borders, the drawing and enforcing of borders, their interpretations and negotiations, that ‘make’ or ‘create’ peoples, languages, races and genealogies” (2010, p. 316). It is a mobilization of neoliberal colourblindness in service not only of Western imperialism, but the continued dominance of “white men’s countries” (Lake & Reynolds, 2008, p. 7) in a globalized world.

In such a world, the construction of migrants as the “virtual enemy” (Balibar, 2010, p. 319) is highly convenient. As Harsha Walia (2014) shows, the discursive construction of undocumented migrant workers as “aliens” suggests that the state is the victim of illegal invasion when, in fact, the opposite is true. More often than not, it is Indigenous peoples and migrants who are subjected to the border’s neocolonial violence vis-à-vis the mobilization of the rhetoric of national security and state sovereignty at the expense of human lives and wellbeing. In other words, it is through the discourse of borders that Others are constituted as representing threats to the order and security of the state. As Jiwani (2002) explains, immigrants have been construed as a triple threat to Canadian society economically, socially, and culturally. Immigrants “steal” “Canadian” jobs, “they” commit crimes, and “they” pollute “Canadian” culture by bringing in their own traditions and refusing to assimilate. Indeed, as observed during Canada’s federal elections in 2015, no mention need be made of race at all when slogans such as “barbaric cultural practices” can be used to point to and exclude an entire group of racialized immigrants (Barber, 2015).

Such negative (mis)representations of the im/migrant as freeloader, terrorist, or dissident fuel the recycling of exclusion through the further amplification of border security. The enforcement of legal and physical exclusion at the border is neither apolitical nor neutral—just as Foucault (2003) characterises racism as the “break between what must live and what must die” (p. 254) borders frequently (re)make and maintain the difference between life and death. Writing of the border between Mexico and the United States, Chicana-feminist Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) describes it as an open wound, a place “where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (p. 25). Her haunting portrayal of the border zone draws attention to the violence inherent in the physical confrontation between two neocolonial states when one is determined to preserve its privilege and exclusivity in spite of the human cost.

The divisions between citizens and states under a racialized regime of a global apartheid are mirrored at the local, daily level. Where a system of global apartheid is characterized by a largely binary distinction between citizens and non-citizens, at a local level, one’s possession of citizenship papers determines access to social services, employment benefits and rights, privacy, mobility, and legal representation. In the case of Jamaican migrant farmworkers in the Okanagan Valley, a region with a majority white population, their differential inclusion and segregation as non-citizen workers in Canada also constitutes a racialized segregation that separates “temporary” black migrants from “permanent” white residents (how long a white resident has actually lived in the community is of little import). Borders take the form of fences, walls, and partitions, uncomfortable silences, too much space or distance, and the avoidance of eye contact. The most seemingly minute of microaggressions, such as when Jamaican workers discuss being given too much space on the sidewalk or flashed artificial smiles in the street, offer profoundly intimate examples of the interpersonal consequences of such segregation.

5.3. Migration and belonging

In a distinctly modern narrative, migration is often presented alongside cost-benefit analyses, as either ‘problem’ or ‘solution’—as though it were “an aberrant form of behaviour in need of fixing” (Anderson, Sharma, & Wright, 2009, p. 9). Migration is framed as a phenomena in need of rigorous international and state management in order to meet desirable outcomes, mitigate risk, relieve acute shortages or fulfill employer preferences. The solution?—“smart” immigration policy and border controls. The privilege and power associated with belonging is erased. The privileges of sedimentation, planting roots, and acquiring citizenship are forgotten, as we collectively determine who will have the right to move and/or to remain in one’s home territory or to reside without fear of detainment and deportation in another space.

These frameworks center the state and its supposedly sedentary citizens, viewed as permanent, static, and homogenous, as somehow “at risk” from an accelerating and increasingly inventive throng of invading im/migrants. Perceived as a product of chaos, either domestic or international, culturally-intrinsic or imposed by external forces, migrants are presumed to bring chaos with them. Forgotten or erased in such narratives is that “outward” human migration from Europe to this world’s “perimeters” has facilitated some of the most violent eruptions history has ever seen, most notably in the “discovery” of the Americas and the colonial imposition that continues across the Western hemisphere. Meanwhile, by centering the needs of business and an ambivalent and abstract ‘state’, such an approach itself perpetuates a system of global apartheid of citizenship and labour that continues to dehumanize migrants by reducing them to mere economics inputs under transnational capitalism.

Not only will borders never halt the movement of people, as the refugee (or migrant) crisis unfolding in Europe has so poignantly illustrated, borders themselves may create more problems than they resolve. The movement of peoples precedes the state and the international

state system by many millennia; it predates passports, security and biometric surveillance, and borders themselves. Until recently, border permeability was not an exception, but the norm (Hansen, 2009). Migration is an inherently human phenomenon, an experience and necessity shared by peoples across all continents throughout the world. Modern ways of seeing tend to recall and remember through territoriality and sedimentation, people have always moved. The collective history of humankind is one of movement.

Envisioning new local and global communities, both in conception and construction, will be laden with contradictions. As imagined political communities stretch and expand beyond the state and identities become increasingly deterritorialized, some Indigenous groups assert territorial sovereignty in statist-terms. As migrants fight for inroads to citizenship and their calls for inclusion are re-broadcast by organizers and activists, the right of the colonial state to select who it includes versus excludes is reproduced. As policy analysts and unions push for greater government oversight of the SAWP, the racism that migrants experience on the ground and the surveillance of their daily lives may intensify. Many of these contradictions may never be fully transcended. However, the alternative of remaining where we are today and perpetuating the same extortionate system, knowing what we know, is to fortify a decaying citadel. Just as the order of the Modern world will not be transformed through nationalism that either extends the sovereign state or brings the Other inside its bounds (Walker, 2006), so neither will the international state system be transformed through national revolutions by the working class. The struggle for migrant justice on a global scale is a fight against border controls and imperialism in their many forms, and the ongoing displacement, dispossession, and repression of racialized peoples around the world (Walia, 2013). Cultivating justice for migrant workers means forming new radical and political relationships across traditional divides of race, class, gender, and nationality. It will require “crossing the river” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 78) instead of shouting at each

other from opposite banks. Most importantly, it will require a readiness to listen, learn, and collaborate in order to achieve what we have only imagined—free movement for the peoples of the world.

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